EXCLUSIVE: Honda's all-new VFR750 Interceptor

CYCLE GUIDE

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$1.75 MARCH 1986

PREVIEW:

DAYTONA

Honda, Suzuki and Yamaha lace on the gloves

HONDA VFR750

Honda's latest, aluminum-frame, 105 horsepower vee-four 750 hits the streets

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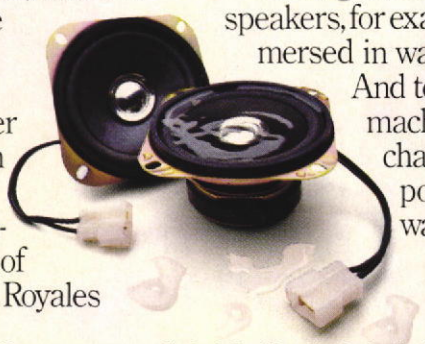
The day tour come in out of the

If there's a glamorous side to testing motorcycles, this isn't it. There's very little glamour here at all.

And yet, it's in this small and rather uncomfortable room that Yamaha does some of its most important work. That of testing our Venture Royales against the elements.



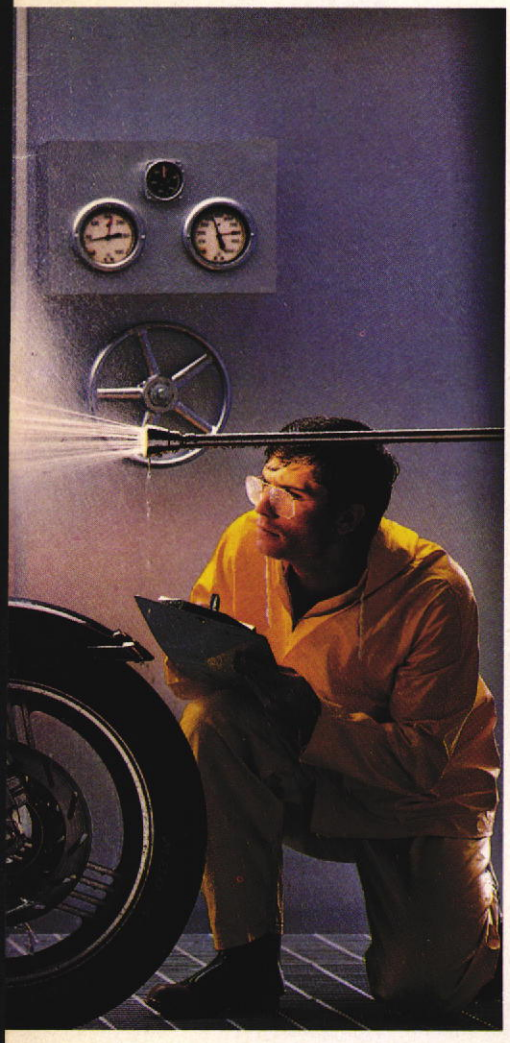
Testing the components. The speakers, for example, are immersed in water for 24 hours. And testing entire machines—with a chassis dyno, high-powered fans and water. Lots of water.

All the time learning how to make our new machines even better than our old ones. And in the case of the 1986 Venture Royale, we succeeded.

First by enlarging the liquid-cooled DOHC four-valve V-4 from 1198cc to 1294cc. Resulting in even greater amounts of torque. And then, by developing a diaphragm clutch to help transmit all of that torque to the five-speed transmission.

24-month limited warranty. Warranty terms are limited. See Yamaha dealer for details. Specifications are subject to change without notice. Rear views mirror(s) standard equipment. Always wear a helmet and eye protection. This model sold in California is equipped with evaporative emission control device.

ing riders rain, so will we.

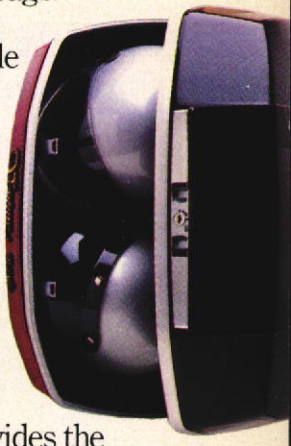


While one set of Yamaha engineers was working on making the engine more powerful, another set of engineers was doing the same to the brakes. Perfecting our electrical anti-dive system, a system that not only reduces suspension compression during braking but also eliminates lag time.

And to make the brakes even more effective, we switched to slotted rotors and four-piston calipers. Thereby increasing stopping power while, at the same time, reducing maintenance.

Not all of our changes, however, were aimed at making the Venture Royale perform better. Some were aimed at making it perform more comfortably. Like modifying our VentureCruise cruise control system to include functions for Accel, Decel and Resume. Adding a 40 channel CB radio with controls for *both* the rider and passenger. Adding a more comfortable seat. Rubber-mounted floorboards. A lower fairing. And a new travel trunk with a three-way adjustable passenger backrest for better lateral support.

We also increased the size of the saddlebags by fifty percent, and added lift-out carry bags along with a reflector that stretches between the saddlebags.



But while much on the Venture Royale has changed, much hasn't. It still features our exclusive CLASS (Computer Levelling Air Suspension System). Which, in conjunction with a pair of massive front forks and Monocross rear shock absorber, provides the finest ride available.

It still has superb instrumentation.

And, of course, it's still the finest touring machine on the road.

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Yamaha and the Motorcycle Safety Foundation encourage you to ride safely and respect fellow riders and the environment. For further information regarding the MSF rider course please call 1-800-447-4700.

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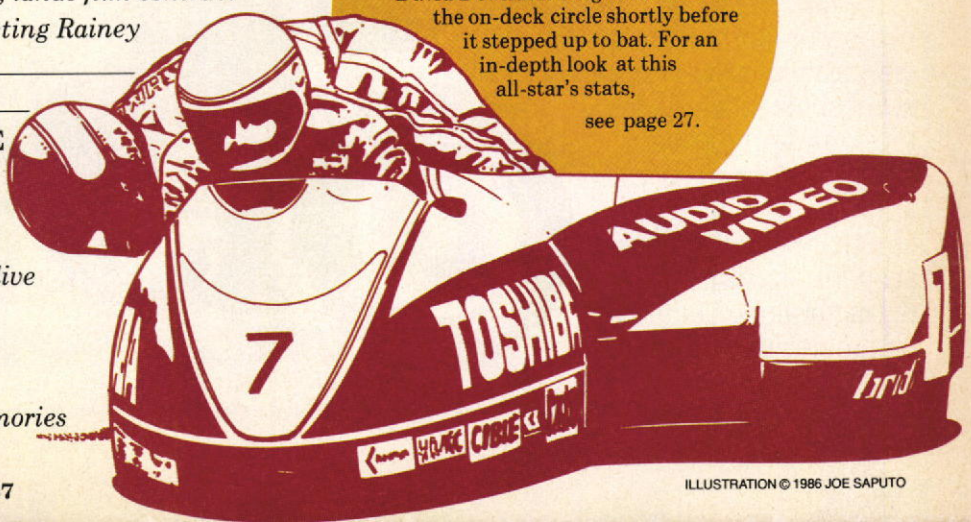
ON THE COVER: Honda swings for the bleachers with its all-new, aluminum-frame VFR750 Interceptor—MVP on the firm's 1986 sportbike roster. David Dewhurst caught the VFR in the on-deck circle shortly before it stepped up to bat. For an in-depth look at this all-star's stats, see page 27.

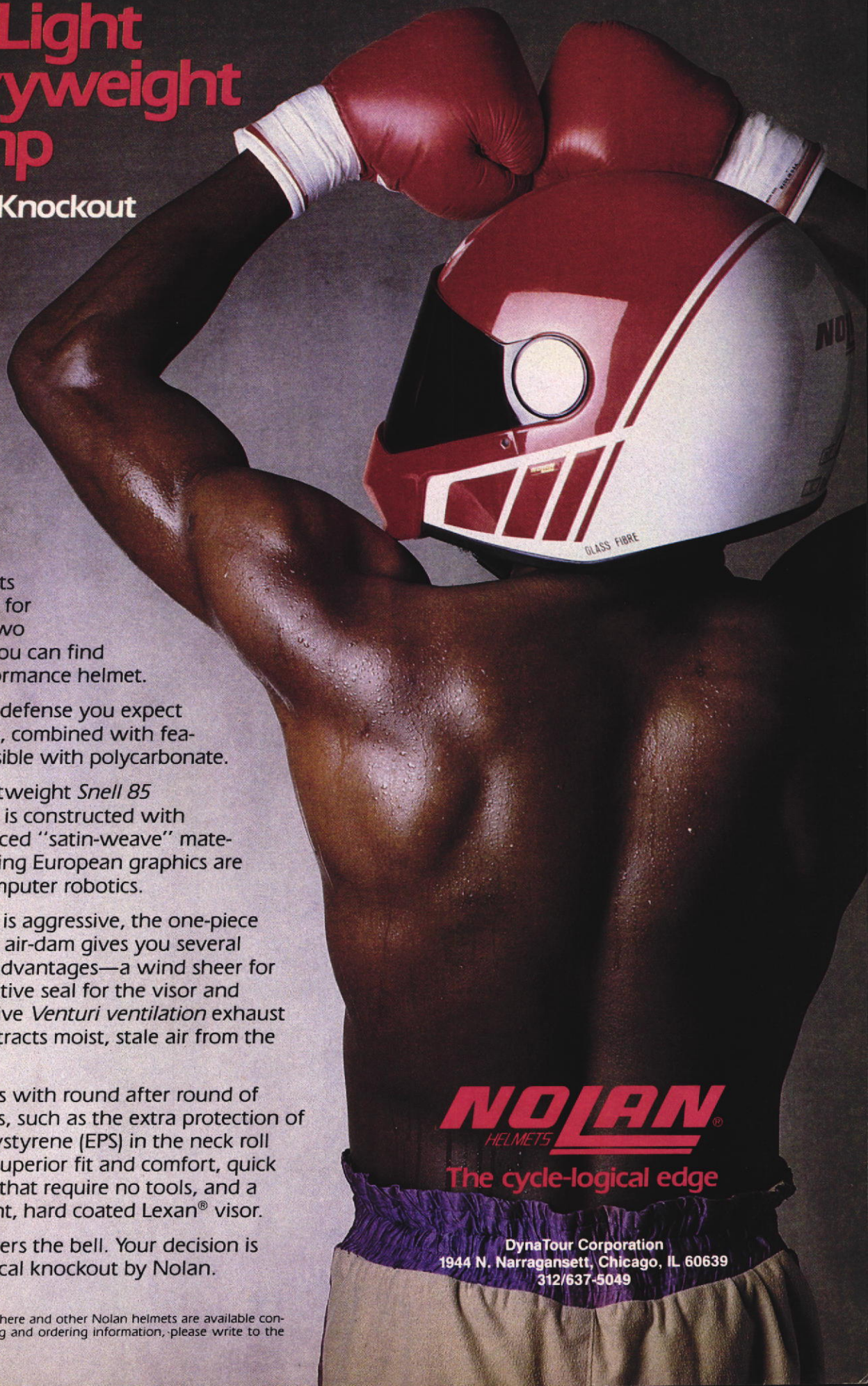


QUOTE: "Spencer is *Spencer*." —Pg. 87

ILLUSTRATION © 1986 JOE SAPUTO

N42 Light heavyweight champ

Technical Knockout by Nolan.



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CYCLE GUIDE'S CYCLE GUIDE

Cycle Guide's catalog of recent test hardware—no brag, just fact

OFF-ROAD

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE	TYPE	ENGINE TYPE	WHEEL TRAVEL, IN. FRONT/REAR	WEIGHT, LBS.	RAKE/TRAIL, DEGREES/INCHES	GEARS
Cagiva WRX 250-'84	August '84	Enduro	Two-stroke	11.1/11.6	232	30.0/4.65	6
Cagiva WMX 250-'84	January '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.7	221	28.0/4.65	6
Can-Am 320 Trials-'84	October '84	Trials	Two-stroke	4.8/4.5	205	25.5/3.00	6
Honda ATC250R-'84	May '84	ATV	Two-stroke	8.8/8.C	311	N/A	5
Honda ATC350X-'85	September '85	ATV	Four-stroke	8.0/7.0	324	23.0/1.4	6
Honda FourTrax 4x4-'86	Nov./Dec. '85	ATV	Four-stroke	4.1/4.6	570	3.0/0.5	5
Honda CR125R-'84	April '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.2/12.3	195	27.2/4.29	6
Honda CR250R-'86	February '86	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.7/12.0	221	27.5/4.41	5
Honda CR500R-'85	February '85	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.6/12.3	232	27.5/4.41	5
Honda XR200R-'84	August '84	Enduro	Four-stroke	9.9/9.6	235	26.0/4.13	6
Honda XR600R-'85	October '85	Desert	Four-stroke	10.9/11.4	284	28.0/4.65	5
Husqvarna 250WRX-'85	August '85	Enduro	Two-stroke	11.8/12.5	239	27.0/4.72	6
Husqvarna 430 Auto-'86	March '86	Enduro	Two-stroke	10.7/11.5	245	27.0/4.72	3
Husqvarna 500CR-'85	April '85	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.9	235	27.0/4.72	4
Husqvarna 510TE-'85	March '85	Enduro	Four-stroke	10.6/11.9	263	28.5/5.16	6
Kawasaki KDX200-'86	March '86	Enduro	Two-stroke	10.1/10.7	225	26.5/5.31	6
Kawasaki KX125-'86	January '86	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.2/12.6	201	27.5/4.57	6
Kawasaki KX250-'84	February '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.6/12.3	220	28.5/4.65	5
Kawasaki KXT250 Tecate-'84	May '84	ATV	Two-stroke	8.6/8.2	319	N/A	5
Kawasaki KLR600-'84	September '84	Dual-purpose	Four-stroke	9.2/8.3	322	29.5/4.80	5
M-Star 250 Supercross-'84	Nov./Dec. '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.7/12.7	230	27.0/4.72	5
Suzuki Quadracer 250-'85	May '85	ATV	Two-stroke	7.2/8.1	326	N/A	5
Suzuki RM125-'85	May '85	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.4/11.8	202	29.0/4.84	6
Suzuki RM250-'84	February '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.8/12.9	220	27.8/4.41	5
Yamaha BW200-'85	April '85	Trail	Four-stroke	6.3/6.6	249	27.3/3.46	5
Yamaha IT200-'84	August '84	Enduro	Two-stroke	10.0/10.6	211	28.0/4.53	6
Yamaha TT600-'85	October '85	Trail	Four-stroke	11.3/10.7	283	28.0/4.65	5
Yamaha TY350-'85	July '85	Trials	Two-stroke	6.5/4.8	193	23.0/1.93	6
Yamaha XT250-'84	Nov./Dec. '84	Dual-purpose	Four-stroke	9.7/7.9	266	28.3/4.60	6
Yamaha YZ125-'84	April '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.9/12.3	194	27.7/4.57	6
Yamaha YZ250-'85	June '85	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.5/12.3	219	28.0/4.69	5
Yamaha YZ490-'84	June '84	Motocross	Two-stroke	11.3/12.7	227	28.5/4.72	4

STREET

MAKE & MODEL	ISSUE	ENGINE TYPE*	DISPLACEMENT, CC	QUARTER-MILE, SEC./MPH	TOP SPEED, MPH	WEIGHT, LBS.	FUEL CONSUMPTION, MPG	STOPPING DISTANCE FROM 60 MPH, FT.
BMW K100-'86	March '86	4I/G	987.2	12.412/108.82	122	506	35–46	139
BMW K100RS-'84	October '84	4I/G	987.2	12.381/109.48	133	532	39–54	139
BMW R80-'85	September '85	2C/G	782.5	13.357/98.36	114	439	37–52	148
Cagiva Alazzurra 650 SS-'86	February '86	90 deg. 2D/F	649.6	12.982/99.18	113	432	34–49	135
H-D FLTC Tour Glide-'86	January '86	45 deg. 2D/H	1337.7	14.378/90.00	107	748	31–49	141
H-D FXRS Low Rider Sport-'86	Nov./Dec. '85	45 deg. 2D/F	1337.7	13.654/96.25	115	592	31–50	132
H-D FXRT Sport Glide-'85	October '84	45 deg. 2D/H	1337.7	14.180/90.36	92	640	28–51	126
H-D XLH 883 Sportster-'86	September '85	45 deg. 2D/F	882.9	14.045/92.40	106	467	37–67	131
Honda Gold Wing Ltd Ed.-'85	March '85	4C/G	1181.9	13.346/98.36	113	810	37–45	134
Honda NS250R-'85	May '85	90 deg. 2D/F††	249.3	13.091/101.58	121	339	27–38	135
Honda NS400R-'85	October '85	90 deg. 3D/F††	387.4	12.324/108.69	125	392	25–45	135
Honda VF500F Interceptor-'84	July '84	90 deg. 4D/F	497.6	12.484/106.00	126	419	33–48	123
Honda VF700C Magna-'85	August '85	90 deg. 4D/G	698.9	12.390/108.82	128	520	34–47	131
Honda VF700F Interceptor-'84	October '84	90 deg. 4D/F	698.9	12.323/106.50	124	512	37–48	136
Honda VF700S Sabre-'85	January '85	90 deg. 4D/G	698.9	12.358/109.09	121	514	28–48	136
Honda VF1000R-'85	July '85	90 deg. 4D/F	998.4	11.308/121.78	149	578	20–42	135
Honda VT1100C Shadow-'85	June '85	45 deg. 2D/G	1099.2	13.022/100.33	112	560	33–44	127
Honda V65 Magna-'85	February '85	90 deg. 4D/G	1098.0	11.440/118.42	142	566	34–46	133
Kawasaki 454 LTD-'85	September '85	2A/H	454.1	13.386/97.08	102	427	37–53	125
Kawasaki GPz550-'85	March '85	4A/F	553.8	12.478/104.89	121	432	44–54	137
Kawasaki GPz750 turbo-'85	Nov./Dec. '85	4A/F	739.0	11.441/118.89	141	532	40–54	135
Kawasaki Eliminator-'85	April '85	4A/G	908.2	11.405/117.49	134	569	22–41	131
Kawasaki Ninja 600R-'85	March '85	4A/F	592.6	12.124/109.09	135	448	40–48	135
Kawasaki Ninja-'85	August '85	4A/F	908.2	11.175/123.79	151	535	32–41	131
Kawasaki Ninja 1000R-'86	January '86	4A/F	997.8	10.994/125.69	162	564	33–44	118
Suzuki GS550ES-'85	May '85	4A/F	572.3	12.551/106.50	119	447	33–48	133
Suzuki GS700E-'85	January '85	4A/F	699.5	11.978/112.21	125	485	27–53	140
Suzuki GS1150E-'85	June '85	4A/F	1135.4	11.032/121.78	146	529	30–55	138
Suzuki GV700GL Madura-'85	Nov./Dec. '84	82 deg. 4D/G	698.5	13.307/102.15	111	546	23–45	143
Suzuki GV1200GL Madura-'85	February '85	82 deg. 4D/G	1165.9	11.364/117.18	140	576	28–45	131
Suzuki GV1400GD Cavalcade LX-'85	August '85	82 deg. 4D/G	1360.4	12.881/101.12	115	806	24–49	155
Suzuki RG500 Gamma-'85	October '85	Square-Four/F††	498.5	11.991/113.20	N/A	374	22–42	134
Suzuki VS700GLF Intruder-'85	July '85	2D/G	699.7	12.998/101.01	112	442	44–63	132
Yamaha FJ1100-'85	April '85	4A/F	1097.6	11.002/123.28	147	543	30–47	138
Yamaha FZ750-'86	March '86	45 deg. 4A/F	749.6	11.383/118.26	145	494	37–45	127
Yamaha Maxim X-'85	May '85	4A/G	697.3	11.779/113.63	121	505	25–47	135
Yamaha RZV500R-'84	October '85	4D/F††	499.7	12.409/07.52	134	422	25–53	147
Yamaha Venture Royale-'84	March '84	70 deg. 4D/G	1197.6	12.759/101.46	124	752	37–53	137
Yamaha V-Max-'85	May '85	70 deg. 4D/G	1197.6	10.922/127.47	151	596	23–32	137
Yamaha XV700 Virago-'86	March '86	75 deg. 2D/G	699.2	13.686/96.46	104†	489	39–48	130
Yamaha XV1000 Virago-'85	October '85	75 deg. 2D/G	981.0	12.993/101.59	111	507	33–47	132

*__A__-Transverse, __B__-Vertical (single-cylinder only), __C__-Horizontally Opposed, __D__-Tandem Vee, __E__-Transverse Vee, __F__-Chain Final Drive, __G__-Shaft Final Drive, __H__-Belt Final Drive, __I__-Horizontal Longitudinal; † indicates a calculated top speed; †† indicates a two-stroke engine

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REAR; 140/90 H 15 T/L RWL; 150/90 H 15 T/L RWL; 120/90 H 16 T/L BW; 130/90 H 16 T/L BW and RWL; 110/90 H 17 T/L BW; 130/90 H 17 T/L BW and RWL; 110/80 H 18 T/L BW; 110/90 H 18 T/L BW; 120/90 H 18 T/L BW; 130/90 H 18 T/L BW and RWL

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Voice From The Wilderness

Reductio Ad Essentium

If it doesn't need to be working, don't build it.

• My very close personal friend, Indian Tom, does not fool with things that don't need fooling with.

I knew that. But like so much we know, it sometimes benefits from illustrative example, by way of reinforcement.

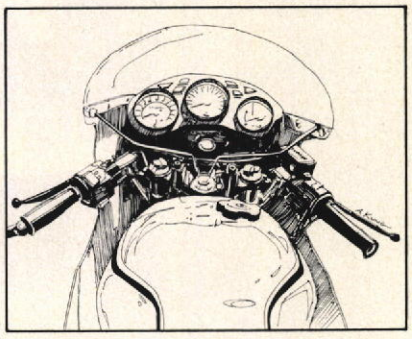
I'd limped into Tom's littered front yard in an old Ford Bronco of brief acquaintance, seeking to engage a few of his ten-dollar hours putting things right. The gas tank leaked, the headlights wouldn't ignite, stuff like that. Indian Tom was quick to see that, thus far, I was asking him to fool with things that legitimately demanded fooling with. But when he estimated he could do it all in a couple of hours, I got to feeling expansive and said, well as long as you're at it, you might fix the fuel gauge. Tom grumbled, What for? Don't need it.

And he was right, basically. Sure, you can't unscrew the cap, shake the Bronc back and forth and see how much juice is in the tank, but you can get by on estimating distance since the last fill-up.

Appreciating this simple truth betrays one's membership in the fraternity of old-time motorcyclists. Indian Tom is an old-time motorcyclist. He does not go in for filigrees and furbelows. You would never, if you had a lick of sense, consider asking Indian Tom to fix the gas gauge on your Gold Wing. If you asked, he might suggest you fix the whole machine—with a match—and without intending meanness, make you feel awkward about owning such an appliance in the first place.

In fact, one can construct a case that all the Ninjas and FJs and Interceptors on the roads are exercises in wretched excess. I'm not saying this to make anybody feel bad, but to remind us all of what motorcycling, at its heart, is about. It's about getting down the road, around the corner, and to a halt, when the need arises, for a beer, a burger, another tank of gas. Anything that does not directly and significantly further these three aims is nonessential and can be eliminated.

Note that I said "can" and not "should." If you want stereo sound on your Gold Wing, a fuel gauge, digital readouts to tell you what gear you're in, what bulbs are burnt out, how much boost your turbo is making, that's between you and your maker. Not Maker as in God, maker as in Honda, which is in many ways more omnipotent.



Note that I said "... between you ..." and not "up to you." The array of crap that clutters your motorcycle is less a matter of what you want than what the motorcycle marketing boys want you to want. We all can recognize the most obvious offenders—the two-wheeled Winnebagos with trailers and TV sets—but you boys and girls on state-of-the-art knee-draggers ought not be too quick to sneer.

What are you doing with four cylinders? Anti-dive front suspension? Automatic petcocks, video-arcade instrument clusters, electronic everything and computers, for God's sake?

I can anticipate the angered reactions of those who know me and my enduring passion for the '77 Ducati Desmo SS that made me what I am today. It is a relic and so am I, and yet we are not. True, much of today's iron is 20 mph faster than the old Duck, but at what cost in complexity? The Nipponese/Teutonic/American technocrats might boast that their contemporary accomplishments are twice, thrice as scientifically swell as the Ducati. Mechanics and owners will attest they take at least that many times the diagnostic equipment and training to maintain. All for 20 miles an hour and a second or two a typical club racer's lap.

It makes all the sense in the world to spend that R&D money and time, incur that complexity and Murphy's Law violations ... overdo everything ... for 20 mph and a second a lap on the race track. And no sense at all on the street. Except to the marketing people and the profilers, two very large exceptions. Of course, none of you is going to admit being one of those slimes in marketing, nor will many of you cop to being one of those *poseurs* who only wants to look fast while going safe and slow. So I can go right ahead with my point about how all this repli-racer cuteness makes no sense in a street motorcycle.

What does? Well, you need two wheels. They should be as light as strength allows, round, stiff. There's room for technology to do its voodoo here. Play with unobtanium, plastic, papier-mâché. Try different diameters, spoke patterns. But stay with two wheels and shoe them with the stickiest gumbo whose tread life you can afford. You need a frame. Make it, once more, as light as strength allows. Stiff counts for a lot. Long or short, angles and such, are matters of handling preference. Again, metallurgy and engineering have acres and acres in which to stretch their muscle.

You need brakes. I have never subscribed to the Brakes are for Girls School of Thought. Good brakes make you go faster. And safer. Those three Brembo discs on my old Ducati did an impressive job of diving into corners, and they still can.

You need a place to sit on all of this, a place to put the gas, lights so you don't have to quit when the sun goes down. And a motor to make it all happen.

Here's where I take one basic departure from minimalist philosophy. You can get down the road with a single cylinder, but two makes the trip a whole lot more pleasant. Two bangers, arrayed a quarter-circle apart as in the Duck, make a smooth motor, skinny enough that you can lean it over till you run off your rubba (or onto your left-hand header) and still simple enough that you don't need seven computer nerds to keep it barking.

Throughout history the beauty of simplicity has been a given, both in the natural and the man-made world. A fascination with the complex, while it has existed just as long, never represented our best instincts. The point of view I advocate does not, as is often assumed, represent conservatism. True progress improves the essential, eliminates the unneccessary and increases reliability. Electronic ignition with no moving parts beats points any day.

And also makes electric starters superfluous.

Think on it. They've made a lot of bikes quicker, cuter, tricker, even cheaper, than the best twins of a decade ago, but have they really built any better?

—Jeff Smith

Guest Editorial

The Case for Complexity

If thine eye offends thee, close it.

• I'm sorry, really I am. I know this is America, and one of our most cherished liberties, right behind living beyond our means and not signalling for lane changes, is the freedom of expression. But if I have to endure just one more earnest diatribe from a nearsighted nostalgic bemoaning the bewildering complexity of modern motorcycles, I'm going to drop a valve.

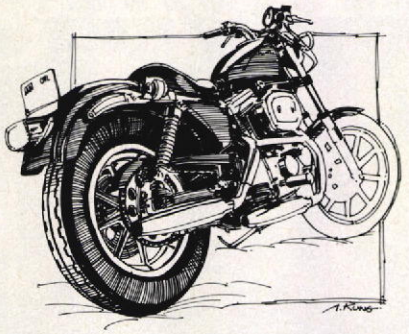
Frankly, I'm surprised that I've lasted this long without discharging some sort of outburst similar to the one you're reading now. Because hardly a day goes by at CYCLE GUIDE when we don't get a call or a letter from a reader complaining that it takes a Master's Degree in Metaphysical Engineering with a minor in High Sorcery to understand today's motorcycles, and the resources of the World Bank to pay the repair bills when they break down.

Mind you, every one of those calls comes in over the telephone system, one of the most highly sophisticated and least understood examples of high technology in everyday life, and more and more of those letters look suspiciously similar to the ones my Apple Imagewriter spools out, circumstances which, at least in my mind, somewhat tarnish the credibility of these communiques.

Nevertheless, I sympathize with those perplexed readers. I could easily spend most of my waking hours boning up on the arcana of variable rising rate suspension, the minutiae of electronic fuel injection, the implications of multi-valve cylinder heads, and otherwise plumbing the forboding and mysterious depths of the deceptively innocent-looking test bikes in the CG garage—not that knowing or not knowing any of these details is going to affect how much I enjoy these bikes in the least.

Because despite the current proliferation of high technology, motorcycles are better than ever, and anyone who tells you otherwise has his clearances set too loose. Today's bikes are faster, smoother, safer, better-handling and more reliable, and that's not just my opinion—that's a fact. Because if they weren't, and if these weren't qualities the vast majority of us demand from motorcycles, most of us would still be riding Bonnevilles, Enfields and Indians. And most of us, you will have noticed, are doing no such thing.

I'm not accusing those of you who *do* like old motorcycles of cultural stagnation. If you're partial to bikes that leak oil on your shoes and vibrate so hard they loosen the spoke nipples on your *buddy's* bike, or if the prospect of spending a leisurely afternoon synchronizing a pair of mutually antagonistic Amals is the only thing that gets you out of bed in the morning, you have my blessing. Just don't try to drag me back into the past with you.



By now some of you—probably the ones with oily shoes—must be asking, "Okay, Mr. Big Shot Motojournalist, so what kind of space-age, triple-underhead-cam moto-missile do *you* own?" Fair question. And right after I answer it, there'll be a short pause so you can shake an admonishing finger at the page and shout "Aha!" in a voice trembling with righteous indignation. Ready? I own a Yamaha SR500. And not only that, I enjoy the little single-cylinder wheezer immensely. It has about as many moving parts as a Swiss army knife, it's so light I have to tie it down in a stiff breeze, and it's no wider than two coats of paint.

It's also slower than a tax refund check, it vibrates like a Cuisinart with a spun main bearing, and the engine makes a racket like God's own lawnmower.

Still, I like my SR500 despite its numerous quirks and eccentricities, probably because I'm heir to no small number of quirks and eccentricities myself. But self-delusion isn't among them, and I'm not kidding myself by thinking that the SR is in any way better than the zooty bikes in the CG stable. Different, yes. Better, no.

But considering how many two-wheel Flat Earthers were pleading with Japan, Inc., to build such a bike, and how poorly the bike actually sold, I have to conclude that either the stone-simple SR500 is still too high-tech for the back-to-basics crowd, or a whole lot of riders didn't put their money where their mouths were.

If even those riders who wanted bikes like the SR500 or Honda's FT500 Ascot single didn't buy them, it shouldn't come as a surprise that most other riders didn't, either. Both bikes were monumental sales flops, and for good reasons. There were other bikes available at the same time, for roughly the same money, that were smoother, faster and more comfortable. Opting for those traits in a motorcycle over the "virtues" of a big single didn't amount to selling out to impersonal mass production and characterless, cookie-cutter motorcycles, either. It was just common sense.

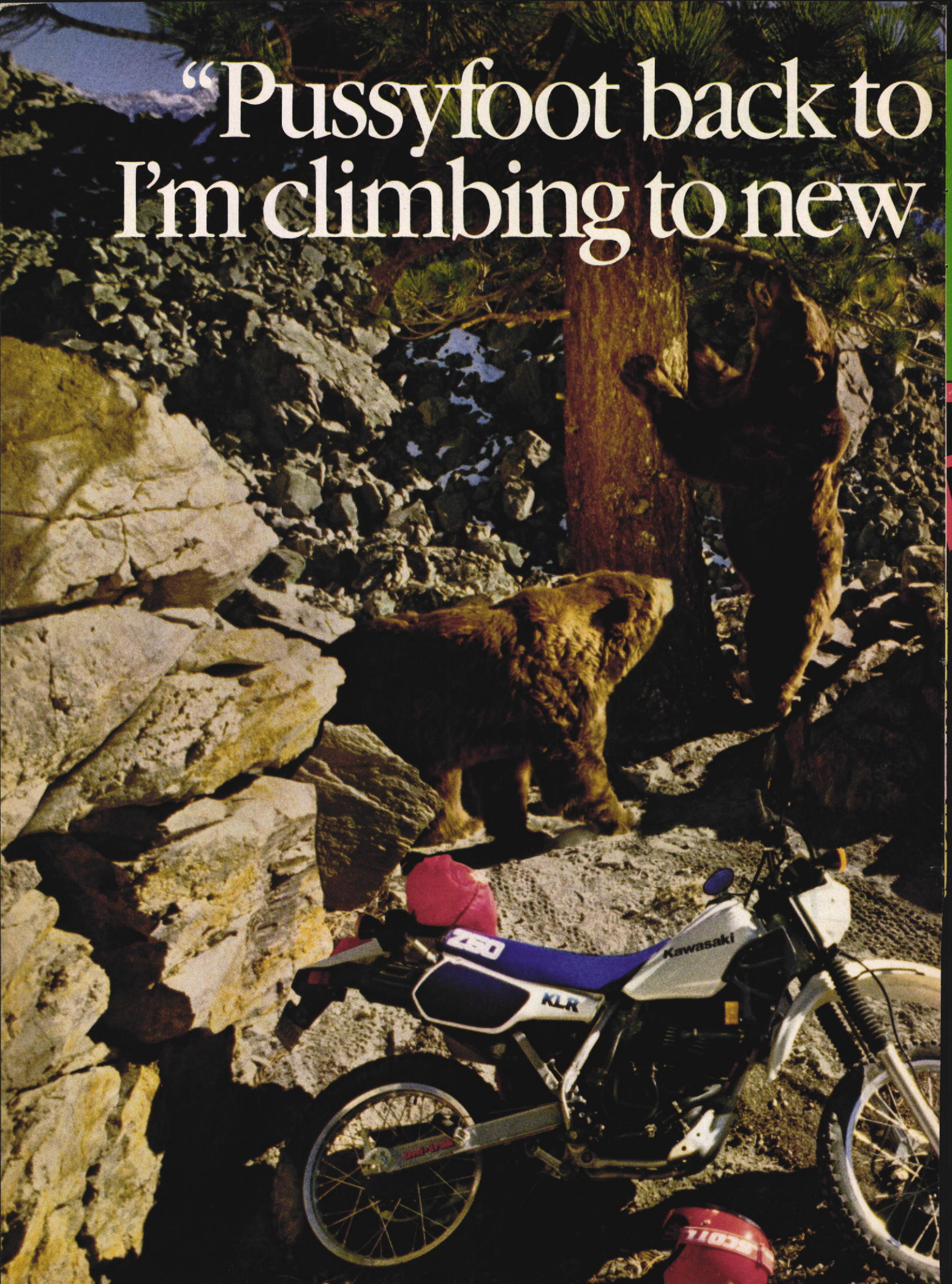
And it's good old common sense that provides the answer to this high-tech versus old-time quandary. Charlie Everitt, former editor of this sterling periodical, rode to the store one day to buy a pack of cigarettes. He asked for his favorite brand, an unfiltered lungbuster named after a desert-dwelling mammal. The store was out of those, so he asked for another brand, also unfiltered. Sorry, out of those, too. After Charlie rattled off the name of every unfiltered cigarette known to the Surgeon General, the clerk snatched up a pack of filter cigarettes, slammed it down on the counter, fixed Charlie with a withering stare and said, "Tear the damn filters *off* 'em!"

Progress is a one-way street. If you don't like fuel injection, electronic wizardry and solid-state helmet locks, ignore the damn things. They're here to stay, so you might as well get used to them and get on with enjoying the ride, which, as we all agree, is the essence of motorcycling.

If you bristle at the thought of owning a 150-mph motorcycle, no one, I promise you, will make you buy one, or, should you decide to do so, make you ride it that fast if you don't want to. And yes, motorcycles cost more to buy and repair today than ever before—name me anything that doesn't. But today's bikes simply don't break down as often as their predecessors did, and I'll take the risk of a limited run of bad electronic-ignition boxes over the spectre of an entire generation of spastic Prince of Darkness electrics any day.

And now my final word on the subject of perfidiously complex motorcycles. I used to own a Ducati, too, and if the Japanese ever manage to come up with a valve train design as needlessly complicated, perversely frustrating and thoroughly outmoded as the desmodromic valve setup, I'll eat a Veglia tachometer.

—Jerry Smith

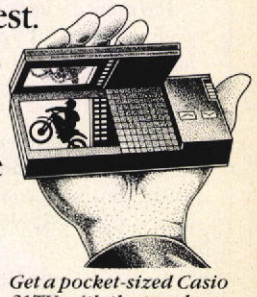

"Pussyfoot back to
I'm climbing to new
250
KLR
Kawasaki

the pavement, wimps! heights of adventure!"

Clyde's not a small man. But his mouth has always been the biggest thing about him.

Bragging how he could run the fastest, jump the furthest, climb the highest.

But this time, Clyde bit off a tad more adventure than he could chew. 'Cause his '86 KLR took him further and higher than he bargained on.



Get a pocket-sized Casio 2 TV with the purchase of an '86 KLR250 or 600. Now through May 31 at participating Kawasaki dealers while supply lasts.

The new KLR250 and KLR-600 are the only dual-purpose bikes in the woods with liquid cooling. Comes in handy outrunning two tons of hug.

And Kawasaki's Automatic Compression Release, plus electric starting on the 600, help the engines fire easily. When you can reach them, that is.

Both bikes have DOHC, four valves and a flat-slide carb. Plus ultra-light chassis with air forks, disc brakes and Uni-Trak® for skimming over large paws.

Clyde's always spoken highly of his KLR. But never so highly as today.

Kawasaki

Let the good times roll.

Specifications subject to change without notice. Availability may be limited. Always wear a helmet and appropriate apparel. Call 1-800-447-4700 for the Motorcycle Safety Foundation beginner or expert course near you.

LETTERS

Rough and rocky roads, impressionistic Classic and a full house of clubs.

INITIATION RITES

I would like to congratulate Jeff Smith on an excellent article ("Voice From the Wilderness," January 1986). This summer I was initiated into the Road Rash Club, so I know a lot of what he went through. I wasn't "gimped" like he was, but I put up with the "Didn't you learn your lesson?" garbage that he did. And he is right: Motorcycling provides an unbeatable rush and is well worth the risk. Keep up the good work, Jeff!

Ted Hegemann
Salt Lake City, Utah

COMMON BOND

It's great to hear from another motorcycling "gimp." I was born without a left hand, and for years, I was green watching my buddies blast around town on their bikes.

With no precedent or encouragement ("Whatta' ya' want, two hooks?"), it wasn't until I turned 26 before I bought a used CB750A. Now I own a "new" '82 CB750F. I had the brakes integrated and the clutch moved to the right side. I'm not proficient yet, but practice will improve my riding.

My circumstances are different from Jeff's, but we share a love for motorcycling that transcends physical obstacles. Our handicaps only focus and intensify that love. Amazed and ignorant "normies" can only give lip service as to why they ride. We feel it in our hearts, hooks and other metal body parts.

Bob Nevola
Jackson Heights, New York

LUCKY RIDER

Jeff Smith may be a gimp now, but hopefully he'll reach the insides of helmets and not the wrists. I had my accident last October, when a 76-year-old lady made a left across my path. Unfortunately, she claimed she didn't see me, the oncoming traffic. The result was a fractured pelvis and broken thigh bone, among other injuries. And they don't want *motorcycles* on the road?

Even though I have a permanent steel rod in my leg, I'll still ride, but not the same way. I was lucky. I used to set fire to the highways and expressways doing 130 mph on my VF750F. Can you imagine a spill at that speed? What "born to ride, never say die" motorcyclists need is the sense to burn up the track, not the highways.

Eric Stovall
Mount Vernon, New York

SCOOTER THRASH

Your readers are generally well informed about the latest hi-tech-supersport bikes. I wish, however, you wouldn't ignore the new scooters. Although not exactly spine-tingling, these rain-or-shine workhorses are interesting and useful to an increasing number of people. Please provide us with individual road tests, comparisons among scooters and technical details.

Hartmut Schmid
North Vancouver, British Columbia
Canada

LETTERS

HELLO, HARLEY

Three cheers for Harley-Davidson! Damn, I'm impressed with their new bikes, especially the FLTC Tour Glide Classic on your January 1986 cover.

I've been riding Japanese bikes since I was 13 and presently own a Honda CB750 (a classic in its own right). I was thinking of buying a Gold Wing but not anymore. I had a Harley- (Aermacchi) Davidson 125cc Rapide—what a piece of s - - t. If they can win me back they can win other American riders back, too. Looks like Harley is back, and it's nice to see.

Bernie Scott
North Kingston, Rhode Island

TOLD YOU SO

Compliments are in order to your testing staff for the unbiased review of the 1986 Harley-Davidson FLTC. Your riders confirmed in print what some of us have been saying all along: There is an excellent touring bike here at home.

Was I impressed? I'll say. As soon as I renewed my subscription to CYCLE GUIDE, I went to my local H-D dealer and bought a new FLTC exactly like the one on your cover. Thanks, CYCLE GUIDE and H-D, you really have produced a jewel in this bike.

T. L. Winebrenner
Hancock, Maryland

SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Out of the eight bikes I own, I love my three Harleys the best; except when I receive my accessories catalog.

I've had Harley footrests on order for my '84 FXRT for a year and rear crash bars for six months. I finally called the Milwaukee factory but got nowhere, only the usual "It's on back order" line.

It seems strange Harley publishes these catalogs but can't supply the parts. It's frustrating when you want certain added features for a new bike that becomes two years old before you get the parts.

Richard Blankman
Racine, Wisconsin

TRAVEL ENVY

I can't help but be envious of the further adventures of Malcolm Forbes. As I read Barry Coleman's article (January 1986), I could swear I heard the text delivered by the host of "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous."

My envy doesn't concern Malcolm's wealth or fame but his ability to fly off to exotic places with expensive moto-toys. My past grand tours seem so lackluster in comparison: trips along the coast and Ohio River, circumnavigating Lake Erie, or even the planned tour of Great Britain next year.

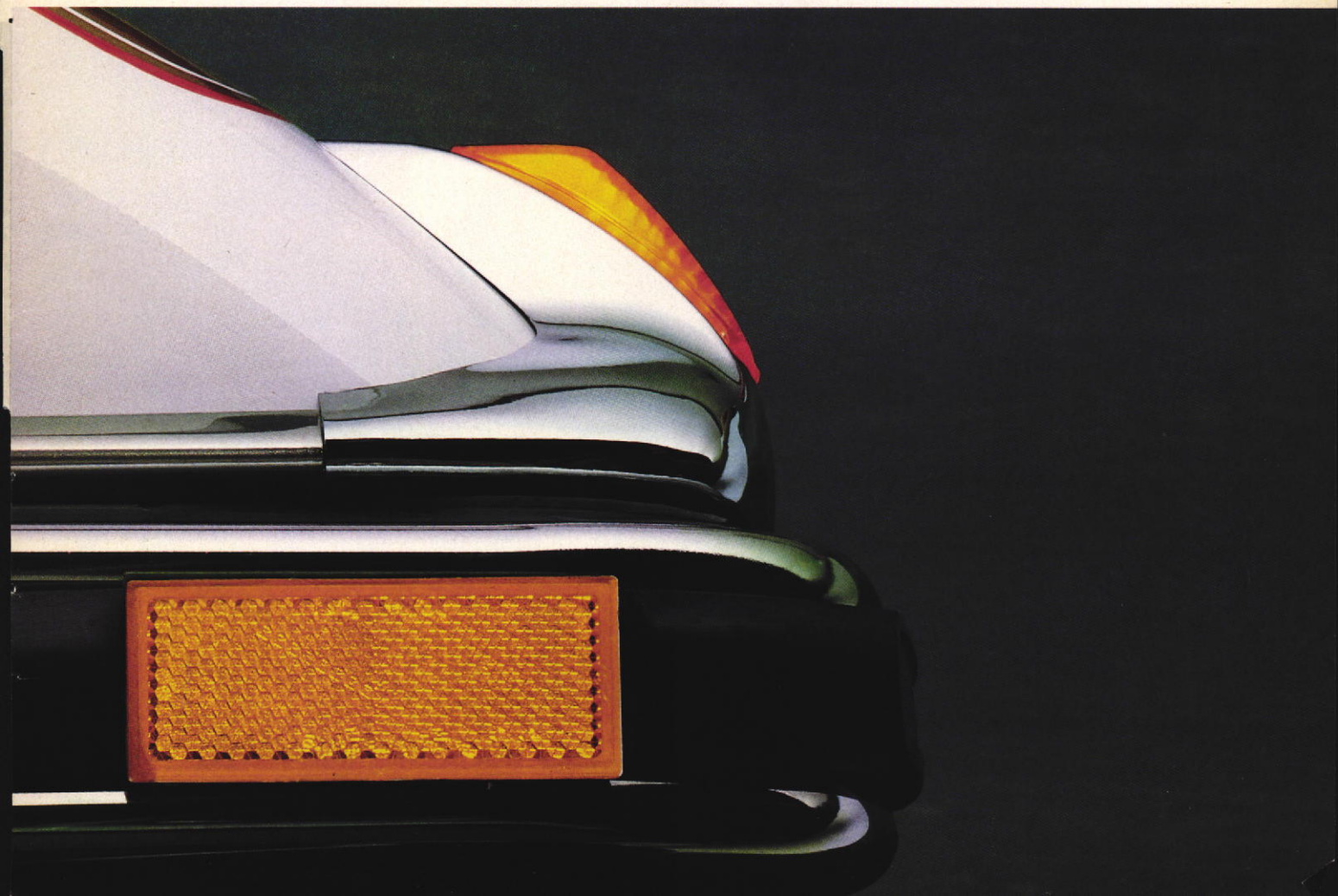
So, Malcolm, if you ever decide to take a charity case on your next excursion, please add my name to the list of drooling prospects.

James Kunselman
Cleveland, Ohio

We know that Mr. Forbes doesn't like to be seen in public with droolers—ed.

SAY THAT AGAIN

Your radar detector article in the No-



LETTERS

vember/December 1985 issue was most informative. In your critique of the Escort, the lack of an earphone jack was cited. The lead time for the article must be considerable, since the March 1985 "Car & Driver" reported on the Passport detector made by Cincinnati Microwave, the same company which made the Escort. The Passport graded out as good as as the Escort, but it has some better features. The main one is a small earphone jack, and the unit is even smaller than the Bel Micro Eye which you tested.

The Passport comes with three different mounting systems and two wiring hookups. My experience has proven that it's the most ideal detector for motorcycles. The lack of weatherproofing against rain is easily corrected with a plastic sandwich bag.

David Miller
Yorktown Heights, New York

Bet you have a very interesting lunchbox—ed.

DRAWING FIRST BLOOD

I have to take issue with some of the things in your "Radar Detector Shootout." You present graphs with numbers ranging up to 1.3. Presumably, this is the distance (in miles?) of first detection, but it isn't indicated in the text or on the graphs.

You also didn't state at what point the detector was first able to get a reading on the bike's speed. If it's the zero point on the graph, then I disagree strongly with your winner. The worse performance of a detector of both bands is the best measure. Using that criterion, the winner is the Escort, which was able to detect at least .20 miles (I guess) from where the bike's speed was detected.

I suggest you spend less time spicing up your technical articles with "Rambo-speak" and more time making sure the article contains all the necessary facts and a sound interpretation of the results.

Christopher Hill
San Mateo, California

THE CHOSEN FEW

Here's a few forgotten winners: Dr. Johns Team Moto Guzzi, the AMA national heavyweight endurance champion (Is that a vee-twin or a V-8?), and Harley-Davidson for making motorcycles.

Rick Blank
Devon, Pennsylvania

Uh, what was the question?—ed.

IDIOTS' DELIGHT

I came home from overseas not long ago, dove into my untouched issues of CYCLE GUIDE and what do I read? A dumb letter about some idiots who want to keep the 55 mph speed limit.

Good God! Be serious. You people are the type who would run into space to give the space shuttle a ticket for going over the Earth. To the 55 Creeps, please climb back into the dark hole from which you came. Your average IQ isn't 55; that's your total IQ!

Patrick Reilly
Flushing, New York

SPIRIT OF 40

I'm tired of those speed demons who advocate the 55 Club and hereby propose the 40 Club. Just think of the benefits. It's much safer and more sedate to ride at 40 mph; one can rubberneck and enjoy the scenery that much more. And

LETTERS

if you spill, you'd sustain less damage than the 55 Club speed freaks.

If enough people join, we could revolutionize the motorcycle industry. We'd no longer need gears three through six. We'd demand that all manufacturers equip their machines with two speed torque convertors; think of the bucks that would save on the initial investment. Speeding tickets would be a thing of the past. All bikers who want to give our sport a good image, send $40 for a lifetime membership to Club 40 in care of Fast Freddie Jermyn.

F. J. Jermyn
Carlisle, Pennsylvania

Do we hear 25?—ed.

SIGN UP HERE

Are those 55 Club guys crazy or what? 55 mph—that could get you killed. And motorcyclists—they have to be nuts. Motorcycles are instant death. Small cars are no better. Big cars aren't totally safe. The only answer, as I see it, is to legislate all motorcycles and cars out of existence, then require everyone to drive a full-sized pickup truck equipped with seat belts, air bags, self-actuating full face helmets. Also fill the cab with Styrofoam pellets to further cushion any impact.

And cut the speed limit! Anything over 25 mph is unncecessary and downright dangerous. Who needs a free society anyhow? Total governmental control is the only answer. Please, oh please, force more laws on me. Join the 25 Club today.

T.C.
25 Club
Massillon, Ohio

We'll just stick to Club Med—ed.

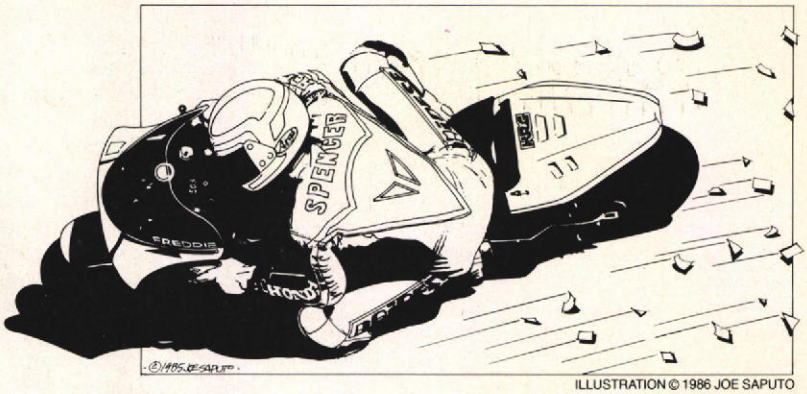
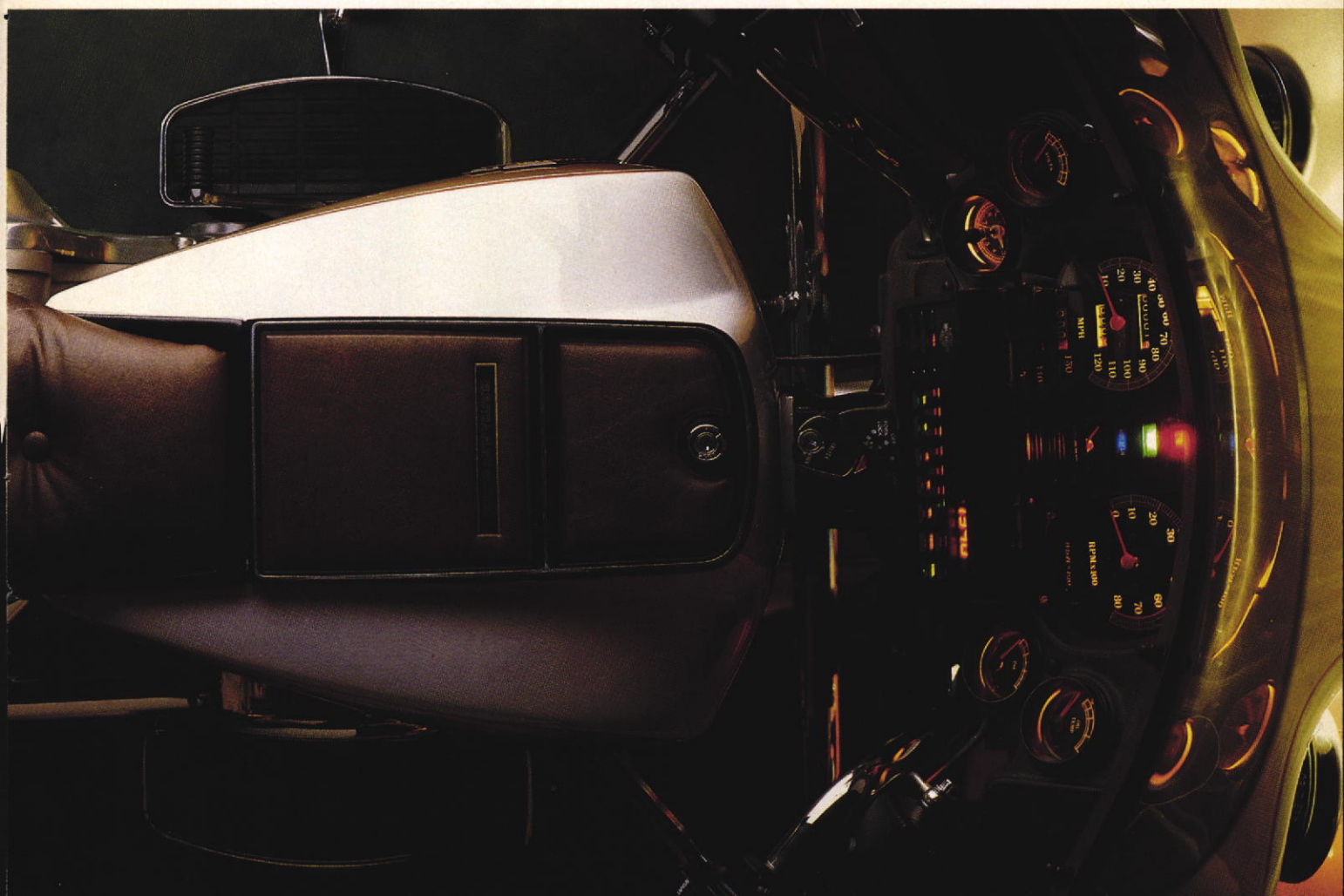


ILLUSTRATION © 1986 JOE SAPUTO

A FAST ONE

Ever since I first threw a leg over a two-wheeled motorized vehicle nearly 30 years ago, I've wondered why manufacturers find it seemingly impossible to build a motorcycle with an accurate speedometer, despite the technological expertise available in the industry.

Surely the manufacturers don't feel a need to fudge on this indicator when even a modest mid-sized machine now is capable of outperforming the most exotic production automobiles. Maybe it's a political ploy designed to keep riders



LETTERS

in a state of "ticket paranoia" by making it impossible to know exactly where they are in regards to the Double Nickel.

Bruce Cunningham
Richardson, Texas

AT ISSUE

You've been the brunt of many jokes around here concerning the reduction to 11 issues per year. Need a vacation? Fewer Japanese bikes to report on?

How about an issue per year on Eurobikes and Harleys only? You now have room for one. You certainly don't want to be known as the magazine with the disposa-issue.

C. Krown
Waitsfield, Vermont

Folks in Waitsfield must humor easily—ed.

SOME ENCHANTED ISSUE

In the late '70s, I became disenchanted with motorcycles; they changed from economical and practical to some kind of glitzy marketing tool. It didn't make sense to me to own two wheels with near 100 hp or with styling aimed at a rider's narcissistic need.

I bought the January 1986 CYCLE GUIDE out of boredom. Flipping through it, I saw the expected 748-pound land yacht and the 162-mph rocket bike that will be ridden at 55 mph on roads. Then, page 24 appeared, and I was stunned: two practical motorcycles. It wasn't just that they were singles but the right size. The GB400/500 machines could be used for commuting and sport riding, and I found their styling fit their function perfectly. I wonder what it would take to persuade Honda to bring them here.

Jon Schwartz
Seattle, Washington

One of the oldest marketing tools in existence—money—ed.

LEST WE FORGET

Yamaha claims its FZ750 is the "world's fastest 750cc production motorcycle," and your magazine states it "offers class-leading horsepower."

Have you forgotten that Kawasaki's GPz750 Turbo, released three years ago, eats up a quarter mile in about one-tenth of a second less than the FZ and is capable of a top speed that is greater by 6 mph? These figures are from your Cycle Guide.

I think Yamaha and CYCLE GUIDE owe an apology to Kawaskai, who made a faster, more powerful 750cc motorcycle than the FZ so long ago that nobody seems to remember. The Kawasaki Turbo is still on sale here in Canada, and it is still the king of the 750s.

Brady Patterson
Gasep, Quebec
Canada

We didn't write the ad; Yamaha did—ed.

GIVE AND TAKE

You were right! I'm lamenting the fact they didn't take the 500 GP bike and put lights on it. In comparison, the perfect bike would be the vee-four 500 detuned to about 100–110 hp at the crank; that would put about 85 hp at the rear wheel, which is close to the newest 750s. Keep the dry weight under 400 pounds with catalytic converters, so 25 to 30 pounds can be taken off with regular pipes. Add 16-inch wheels, fully adjustable suspension, a Rothmans-Honda paint job and a price under $4500, and you'd have a bike I'd give that proverbial left portion of

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LETTERS

my anatomy for! Now if we could just convince Honda and the EPA. . . .

Robert Miller
Polson, Montana

CAN WE TALK?

No matter what kind of letter people write to you—be it cancelling their subscriptions, telling you about their bikes, boasting over what their old Triumph does down the boulevards or whatever to make you pleased or insulted—you always throw dirt in their faces with those incredible, smart-aleck, snappy answers. You guys are great. Sometimes I'm even giggling or laughing till. . . . Anyway, what I want to know is who the heck writes your material for the answers? Joan Rivers? Henny Youngman? No one editor can be that sarcastic.

Jeremy Smith
Port of Spain
Trinidad, West Indies

Wanna' bet? Take our editor . . . please!—ed.

THE WINNER IS

I'm so tired of seeing you called "Honda Guide." CYCLE GUIDE is an open forum for all motorcyclists. You write to those who buy motorcycles, and more people who ride bikes and buy magazines own Big Four bikes, by a wide margin.

Those bikes have performance, tech features and price tags for almost anyone. I don't wave company banners; I ride what works. I make up my mind what I want a bike to do and look at every bike I can. The ones I ride always seem to say Yamaha, Honda, Kawasaki or Suzuki on the tank.

Please don't think me un-American. The American way is free enterprise. You make the best product for the dollar and the people cast their votes from their wallet. The votes get tallied, and people win . . . and lose.

Rick Park
Freeport, Texas

PEAK TECHNOLOGY

Let's stop talking about "Advanced Japanese Motorcycle Technology," because there's no such thing. Magazines continually compare meaningless quarter-mile figures. Japanese bikes can dust anything from Europe or America only because they are tuned for peak horsepower. Below 6000 rpm, where non-dragracers spend 90 percent of their time, the average Japanese cycle is pretty gutless. Harleys and Guzzis are touring machines; they use mild camshafts and intake and exhaust systems tuned to make more low-end torque at the expense of peak horsepower.

Why don't cycle magazines publish a list of roll-on acceleration figures (i.e., usable power) alongside of the quarter mile specs (i.e., peak horsepower)?

Victor Braun
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Gutless? Have you ridden a GS1150 lately?-ed.

All letters must include the writer's name and address. Letters will be edited for length. Due to the volume of mail received, we regret we are unable to give personal responses. •

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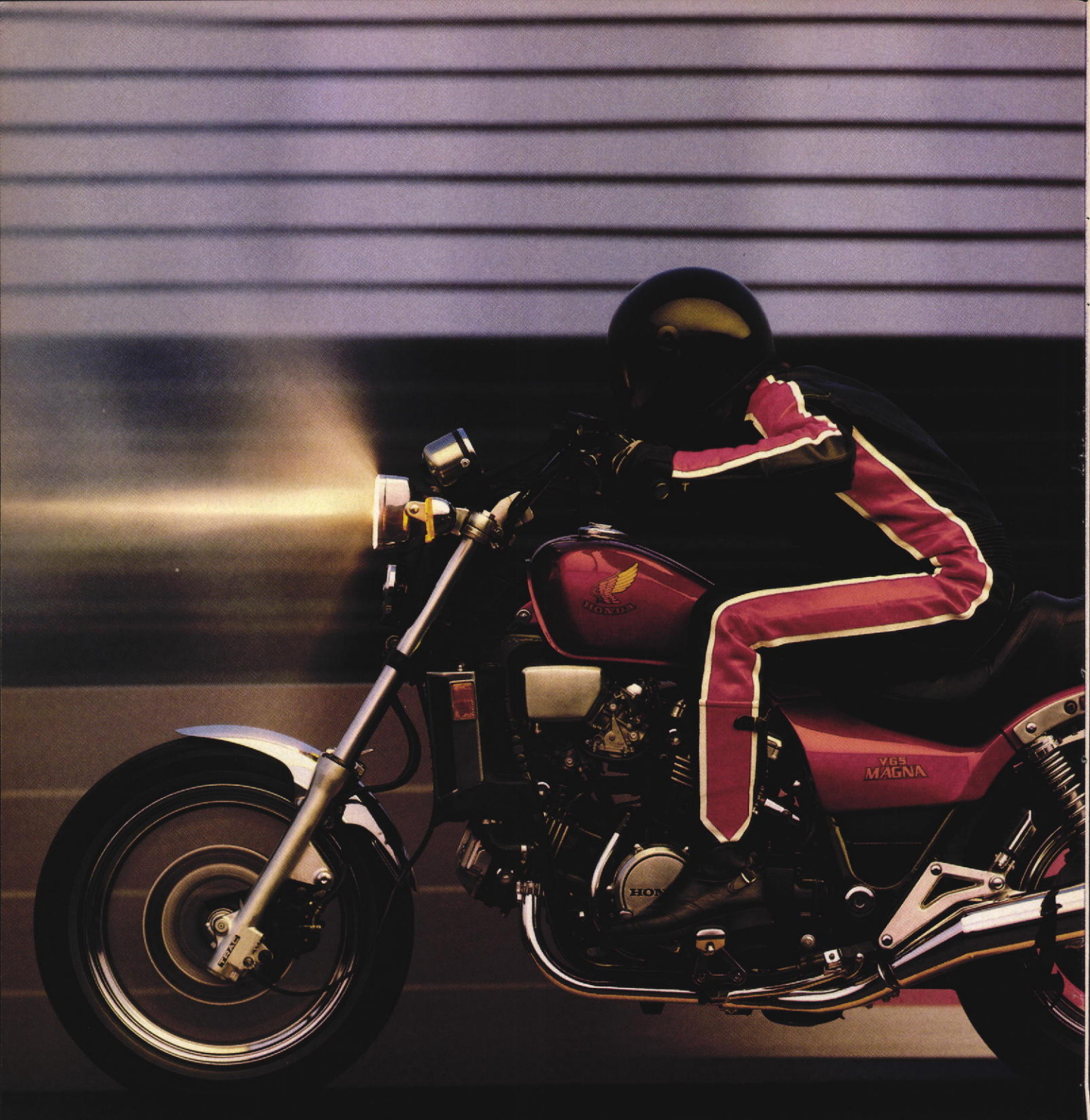

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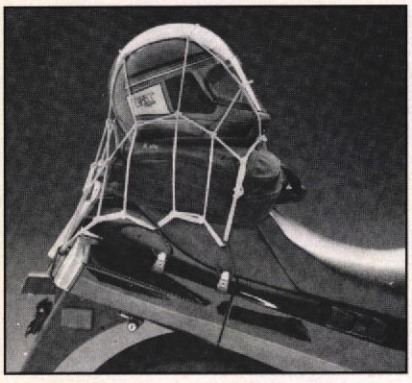
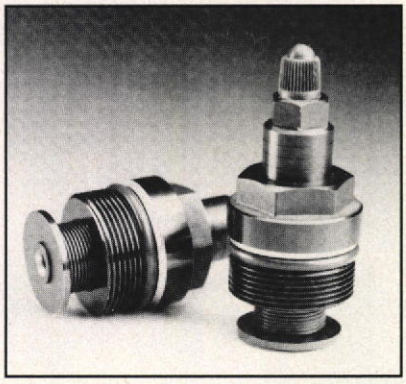
Motomart

Bargains on the March.

Net Gains: Securing your Lego replica of the White House to your bike's seat or rack can be a real pain, but carrying such awkward items is no problem with the new Wolf-Trap. According to Wolf, these elasticized hand-tied cargo nets feature a unique knot design that eliminates crimps or fasteners that can scratch helmets or tear jackets. Wolf-Traps are available in red, blue, black or yellow, and carry a $19.95 suggested retail price. The nets are available directly from Wolf Products, Dept. CG, 3243 Arlington Ave., Suite 203, Riverside, California 92506.

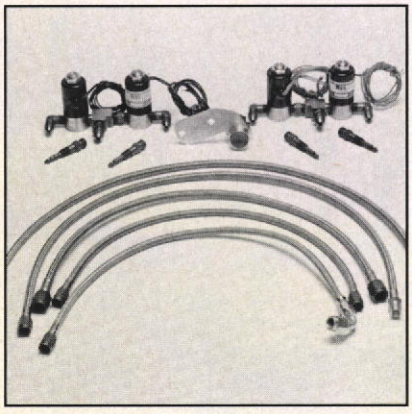




Preload Panacea: If the fork on your FZ750 just can't keep it up anymore, maybe you should try a set of Lockhart's QuikSet Preload Adjusters. These black-anodized aluminum adjusters are precision machined, and claimed to provide simple, accurate adjustment for ride height and spring preload. Lockhart states that QuikSets come with all necessary hardware for easy bolt-on installation on '85 or '86 FZ750s, and carry a suggested retail price of $34.95 per pair. Further information is available from Lockhart, Dept. CG, 15717 Texaco St., Paramount, California 90723.

That Rings a Bell: Bell's new GT2 features coordinated colors and painted graphics, styled to strike just the right note. The new Bell features a push-button-adjustable faceshield, an air-dam, adjustable vents and ear pads, and a padded neck roll. The GT2 is Snell '85 and DOT approved and comes in sizes 6 ¾–7¾. Suggested retail prices are $199.99 for solid black or red, or $219.99 for red/white/blue, red/white/black or silver/black/red. For more information, contact Bell Helmets Inc., Dept. CG, 15301 Shoemaker Ave., P.O. Box 1020, Norwalk, California 90650.

Two In One: Orient Express helps clear up some of the mystery in high performance with its Dual Stage Nitrous Oxide kit. The package consists of two independently adjustable systems: The first operates in the low- to mid-rpm ranges; the second one covers high-speed, high-rpm operation. The systems also are designed to be linked together or operated independently, and have a $795.00 suggested retail price. For more information, contact Orient Express Racing Products, Dept. CG, 375 W. Sunrise Highway, Freeport, New York 11520.



Dry Fashion: When spring comes in like a lion, keep the savage beast from ravaging your bike with a Dry Rider bike cover. According to the manufacturer, a reflective silver polyurethane coating over 70-denier nylon taffeta prevents condensation by allowing the cover to breathe, and a heat shield protects the cover from hot exhaust pipes. Elasticized hems are designed to provide a snug fit over bikes up to 1300cc. The covers come in three sizes: basic for a suggested retail price of $39.95, half dress for $42.95 and full dress for $44.95. For a full cover-up, contact Neese Industries of Louisiana, Dept. CG, P.O. Box 627, Gonzales, Louisiana 70707.

Brace Yourself: If you're looking for some way to shore up your Ninja's handling, a Telefix fork brace just might be what you're looking for. The company claims these German-made braces need no shims or spacers, and can be installed in minutes. Telefix offers the braces for all 600 and 900 Ninjas, as well as most other models of sportbikes. The suggested retail price for the Telefix fork brace is $69.95. For more information on specific applications, contact G. & G. Imports, Dept. CG, 3401 W. Fifth St., #110, Oxnard, California 93030.

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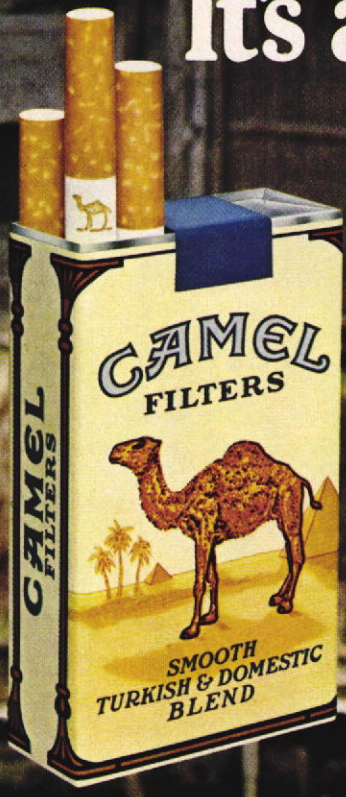

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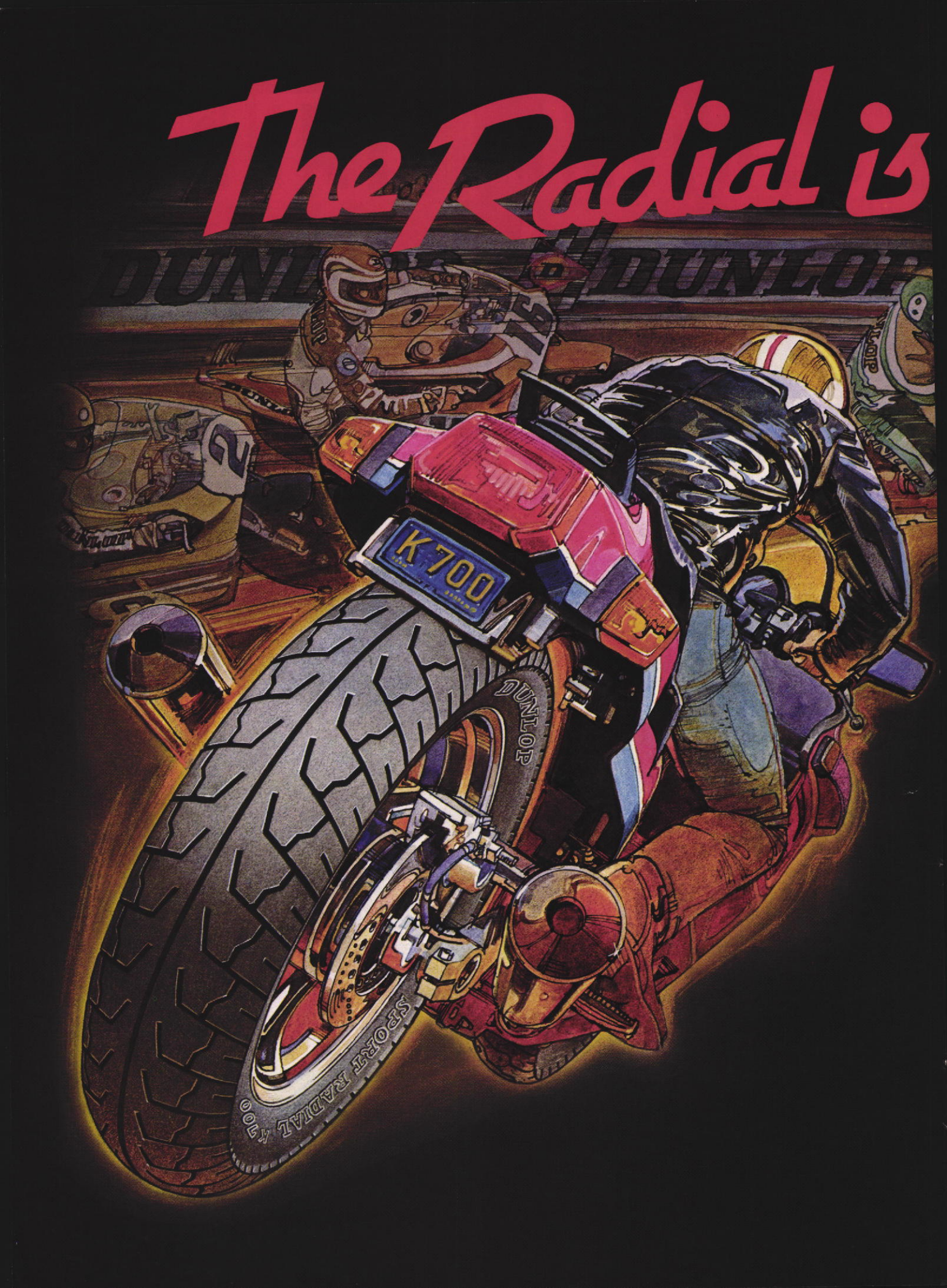
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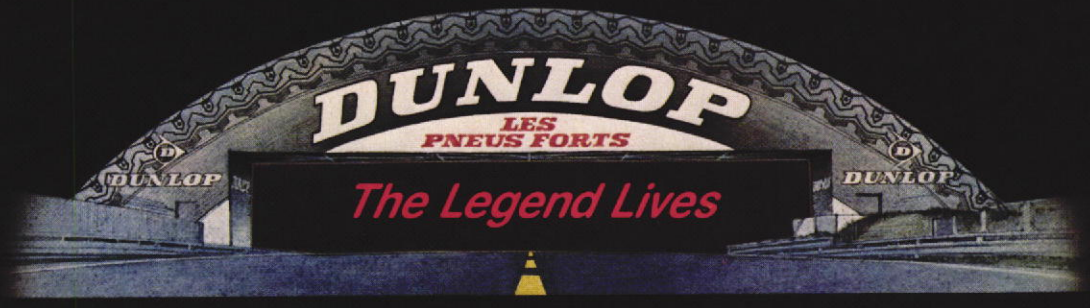

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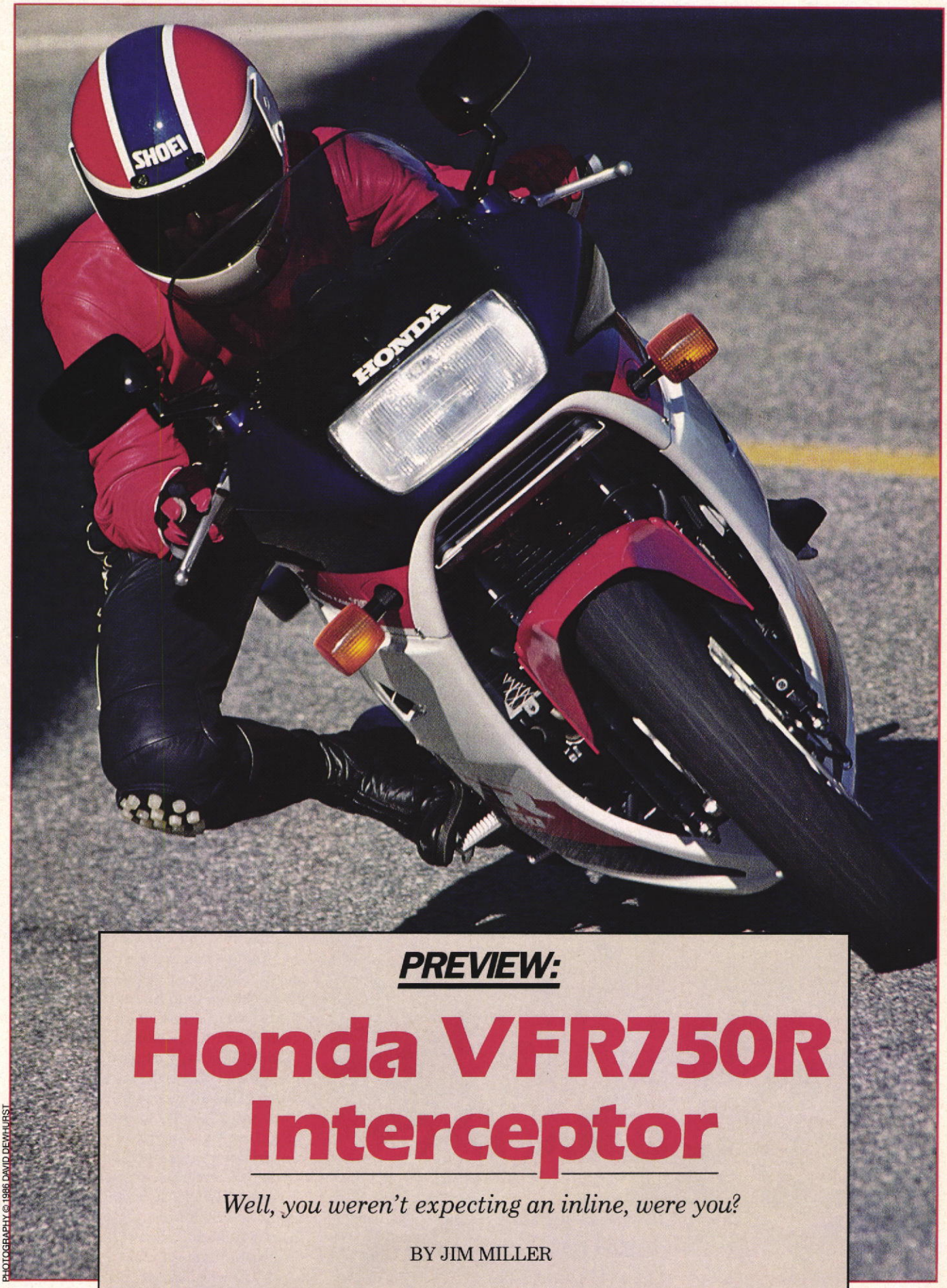

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PREVIEW:

Honda VFR750R Interceptor

Well, you weren't expecting an inline, were you?

BY JIM MILLER

Building a first-rate sportbike really is quite simple: For starters, you take the reigning class champion as a baseline, then just design a motorcycle that's quicker, faster, handles better, stops shorter and looks like it just rolled off a racetrack paddock. Once you've finalized your design, you simply pour in enough money to finance a defense contractor's slush fund, then hope that no other manufacturer outperforms *your* design—at least, not until next year.

Last year, Yamaha's FZ750 took its turn as king of the hill, but prior to that Honda's V45 Interceptor sat at the top of the heap for almost two years. After setting the motorcycling world on its ear in 1983, the VF750F's popularity made it almost commonplace the following year. But Honda's once-proud trendsetter was relegated to has-been status in '85 by the FZ. Moreover, it seemed Honda had abandoned the Interceptor altogether, offering only the ITC-inspired milquetoast VF700F, which was assailed even by such upstarts as Kawasaki's Ninja 600R.

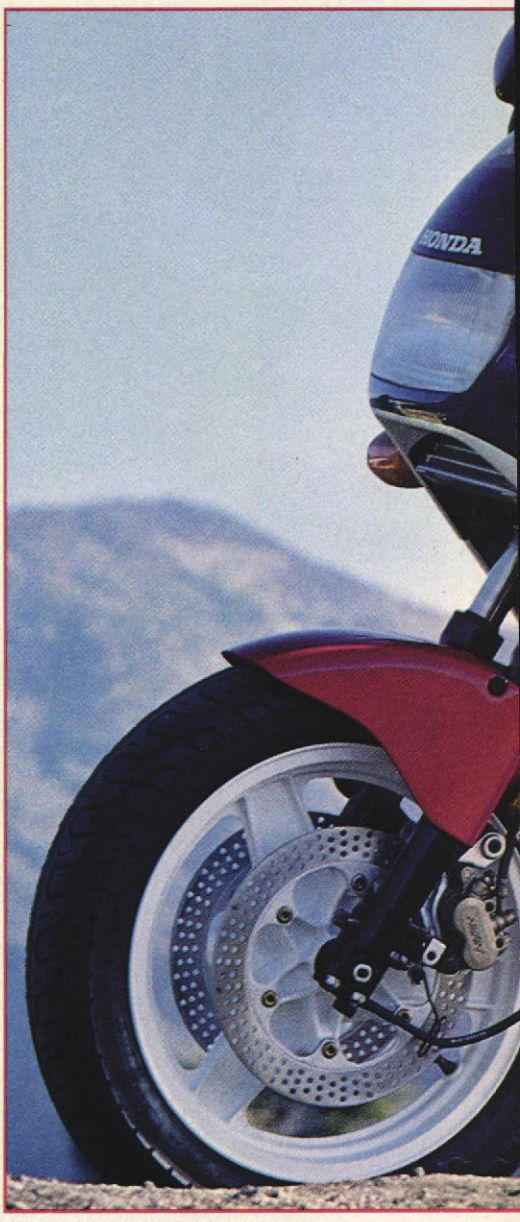
But this year marks the end of that abandonment, and Honda figures to turn the tables on Yamaha's FZ750 with the bike you see here, the 1986 VFR750 Interceptor. This all-new VF shares little more than the name with its predecessor, even though, in general specification, the old and the new three-quarter-liter engines seem quite similar: Both are dual-overhead-cam, 16-valve, 90 degree vee-fours, with a 70.0mm bore and 48.6mm stroke, and a displacement of 748cc. After this point, though, the gap widens: The new Interceptor comes with a six-speed gearbox instead of the old five-speed, for instance, and after that it's apparent the two are as different as the Isle of Man and Manhattan Island.

Still, the very fact that the new Interceptor is still a vee-four might come as a surprise to some, particularly after the lukewarm reception of Honda's vee-fours in Europe and the recent success of such inline-fours as Yamaha's FZ750 and Suzuki's GSX-R750. Even confronted with those successes, however, Honda considers the vee-four inherently superior to an inline, for a wide variety of reasons.

For instance, despite evidence to the contrary, Honda still insists that a vee-four is narrower than an inline, and notes that a narrow motor provides a low center of gravity, excellent cornering clearance, and minimal frontal area for low aerodynamic drag. Internally, the vee-four's short crankshaft is less likely to flex than a comparable inline crank, and so permits higher engine speeds than an inline, and also requires fewer main bearings (four instead of an inline's five or six). Of course, Honda is aware that theoretical advantages mean nothing if they don't transfer to the real world, and the VF's recent faltering performance in privateer Superbike racing partially explains the new bike's existence. The '86 Interceptor comes complete with a racing pedigree of its own, though; it's closely based on Honda's RVF750, which won the 1985 World Endurance Championship.

Honda's commitment to the vee-four has been sorely challenged over the past two years, however, and the company is determined to reestablish the vee-four's street dominance with this all-new VFR. To that end, much of the company's engine work revolved around one simple goal: extracting as much horsepower as possible from the new vee-four. But that seemingly straightforward task ultimately took almost a complete redesign of the old vee-four, concentrating on two areas—reduced internal friction and increased breathing ability.

One of Honda's first moves in reducing internal friction was to switch from the old VF750's chain-driven camshafts to a gear-drive system similar to that used on the VF1000R. According to Honda, the new cam drive not only reduces frictional losses by up to 30 percent compared to the previous chain, but it gives more accurate cam timing as well. Further up the valve train, the camshafts and rocker arms came in for their share of change, too. While the old VF actuated two valves via a single cam lobe



operating a forked rocker arm, the new setup uses a separate lobe and rocker for each valve. In addition, the new rocker arms pivot on ball-and-socket fulcrums rather than on a shaft, and the screw-type adjusters have been relocated from the valve end to the pivot end of each rocker arm. The new design reportedly provides a number of benefits, including reduced reciprocating weight, and, combined with an all-new new lubrication system, less camshaft wear and better service life. The biggest advantage of the new rocker-arm design, however, is that eliminating the rocker shafts allowed Honda to reangle the intake ports for a straighter shot into the combustion chamber.

The rocker-arm design also represents a weight savings of 6 grams per valve. And while that figure certainly won't bring a smile to a Pritikin dieter's face, it does point up another avenue Honda took to reduce internal friction on the new VFR. Every internal part on the vee-four was considered for weight savings, and in its search for extraneous grams Honda left no part unturned—even the valve stems are necked down below the guides. That additional machining produced a savings of 0.5 grams on each intake valve and a whopping 1.5 grams on each exhaust. A hard look at the piston/rod assemblies turned up the largest amount of fat; more than 110 grams in the piston (20 grams), rod (90 grams) and piston rings (1.3 grams). The payoff here is twofold: Not only do lighter reciprocating parts reduce engine pumping losses, but they also allow for a higher redline—the new VFR can spin to 11,500 rpm, 1000 rpm higher than before.

To take advantage of that higher redline—and the straighter inlet ports—Honda redesigned the intake system to increase the high-rpm breathing over the old VF motor. After increasing both the carburetor size (from 32mm to 34mm) and intake-valve size (from 26mm to 27mm), the VFR's designers reangled the CV carburetors for a straighter path into the combustion chamber. The intake system was uncorked upstream of the carburetors as well; the airbox volume now is 7.2 liters, up from 6.5 liters on the old 750.

While most of the intake modifications could be considered standard hot-rod techniques, improving the exhaust flow wasn't quite so simple. In fact, to increase exhaust flow and increase cylinder scavenging, Honda engineers abandoned the 360 degree crankshaft of the old Interceptor, instead substituting a 180 degree crank. This change smoothes the VFR's power delivery, and allows Honda to use a true four-into-two exhaust system, in which the exhaust pulses of the front cylin-

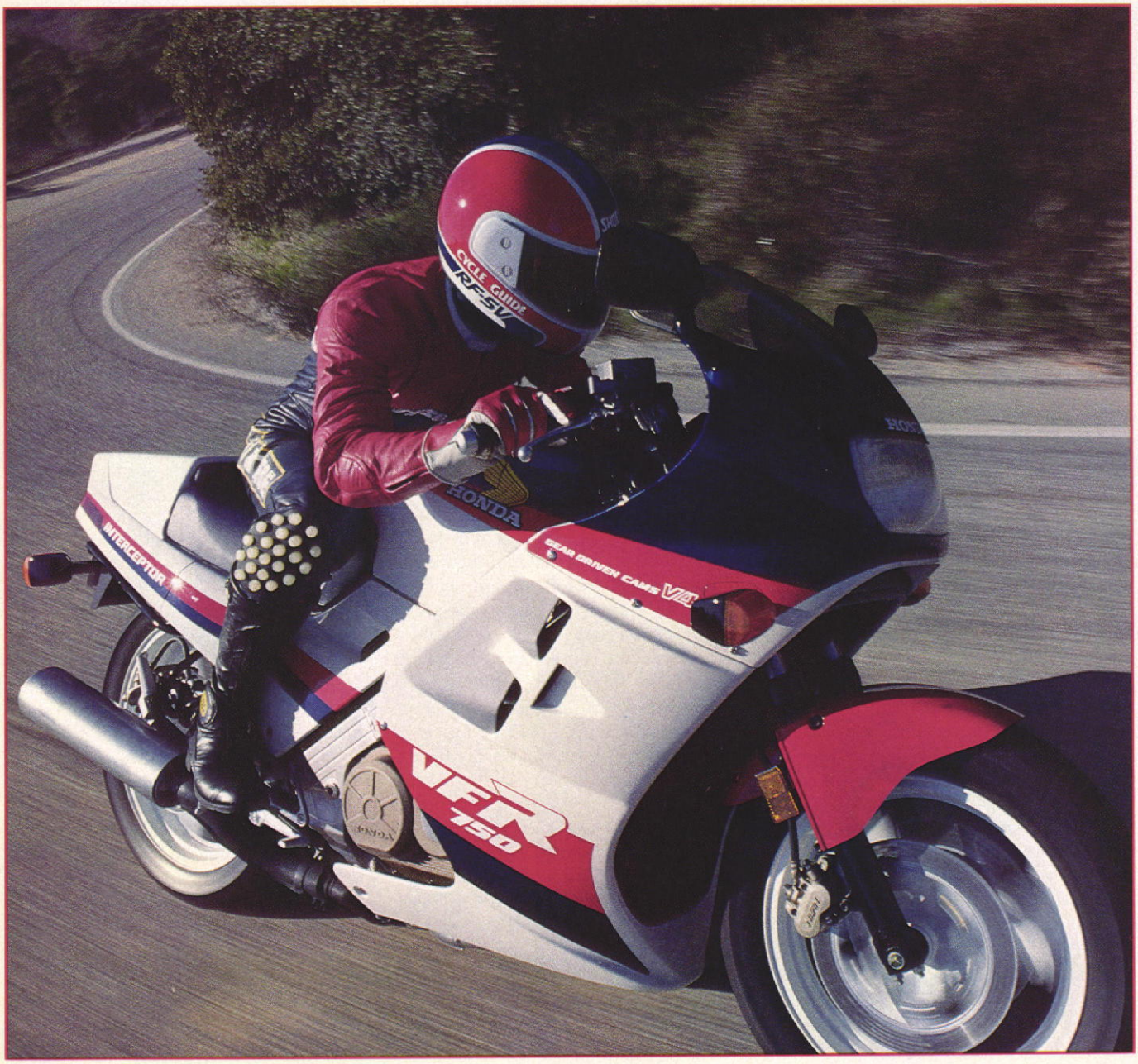
Continued

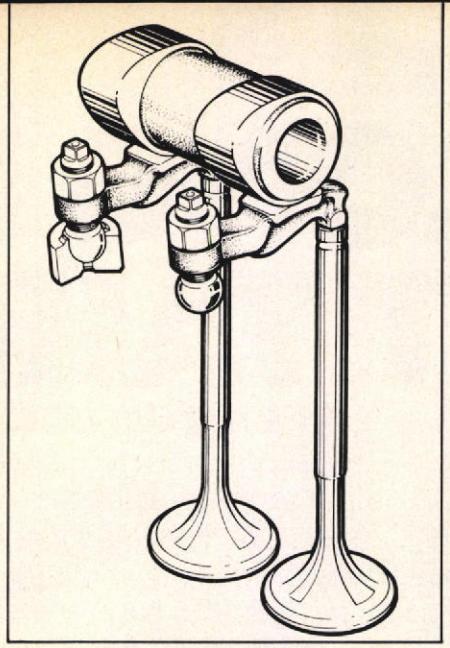
der improve cylinder filling of the rear, and vice-versa. One byproduct of the crankshaft change is the exhaust note; compared to the old VF, the new VFR reportedly sounds much more frenetic, building to a crescendo as the revs rise. And as you might guess, one other item that's changed is the Interceptor's power output. While the original VF750F was rated at 86 horsepower, the VFR checks in at a claimed 105.

Certainly, one glance at the new bike will tell you that Honda didn't spend *all* its development time on the VFR's engine. And just as Honda's quest for horsepower required a complete engine redesign, its quest for better handling involved a ground-up overhaul that left little more than the wheel diameters (16-inch front and 18-inch rear) unchanged. Those efforts are most apparent with the VFR's frame, too, which draws on the lessons learned from the RVF750 endurance racer. Instead of the full-cradle steel unit of the original VF750, the '86 Interceptor combines aluminum castings and extruded-aluminum rectangular tubing in a frame that Honda claims has 50 percent more torsional resistance than the old steel unit, and is nearly as strong as the racebike's. As with the RVF750's frame, a single rectangular-section beam runs from the steering head to the swingarm pivot on each side. Two truncated downtubes bolt to the front of the motor, which effectively "hangs" from the frame, to form an extremely compact—and extraordinarily dense—package. An extruded aluminum swingarm ties the rear wheel to the main frame, and a bolt-on steel subframe supports the seat and tail section.

That subframe stands out for another reason, too, because steel is in short supply on the 1986 Interceptor. At a claimed 445 pounds, the new Honda weighs in at 42 pounds less than the original VF750F, and from its hollow axles and dished bolts to its sieve-like brake rotors, the VFR reflects that weight loss. While much of that lost poundage is apparent from the generous use of aluminum alloy in such items as the radiator, oil cooler, handlebars, and footpeg carriers, other ounce-trimming moves are more subtle. The brakes, for example, use ceramic-composite pads that are 2mm thinner than the old parts. These not only allow for thinner—i.e., lighter—brake calipers, but according to Honda, the calipers flex less than the old parts.

One weight-saving move on the new Interceptor might seem a step backward; the





VFR valve setup has one valve, one rocker

Putting an end to two-up valve gear.

Stripped of its full fairing, VFR750 displays its endurance-racing heritage

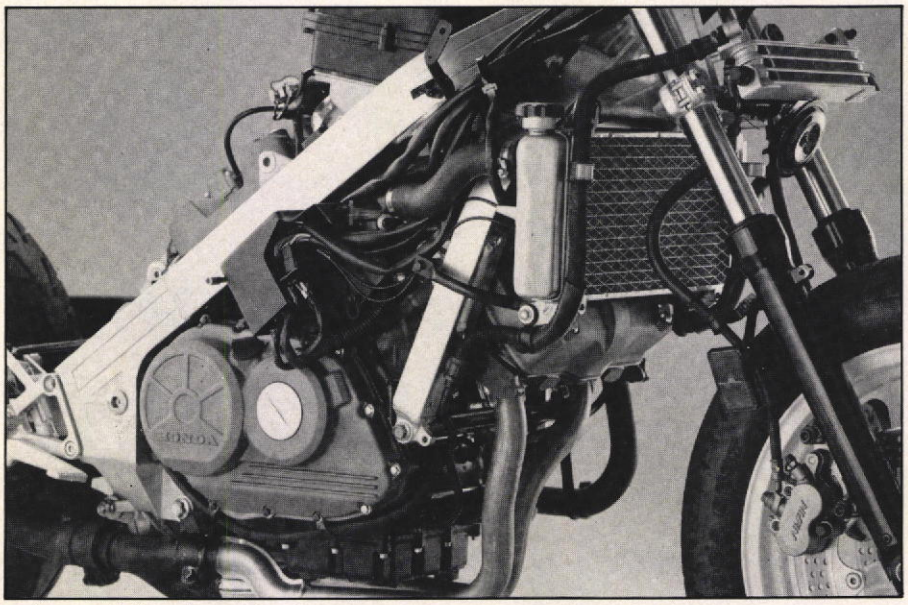
Aluminum frame and all-new motor mean the beauty is more than skin deep.

'86 VFR's fork uses 37mm-diameter stanchion tubes, down 2mm from the VF750F parts. Overall, for a front-line sporting machine, the VFR's suspension seems decidedly mundane. Honda completely reworked the TRAC system as a further weight-trimming measure, but that anti-dive system remains as the only damping adjustment on the new Interceptor. The fork apparently will have to do without the old VF750's three-position rebound adjuster; although included on the pre-production model we saw, the adjustable rebound damping reportedly won't make it to the production line. At the rear, the reworked Pro-Link suspension sports only a hydraulic preload adjustment, similar to that found on the NS400R triple.

Anyone familiar with that two-stroke screamer will recognize the '86 Interceptor's bodywork, because the heritage is apparent. According to Honda, however, that familiar look has been refined so that the new Interceptor enters the lineup as the most aerodynamic Honda yet; not only does it match the company's previous aero-ace—the fully faired European VF500—it actually outdoes its smaller sibling with the rider upright.

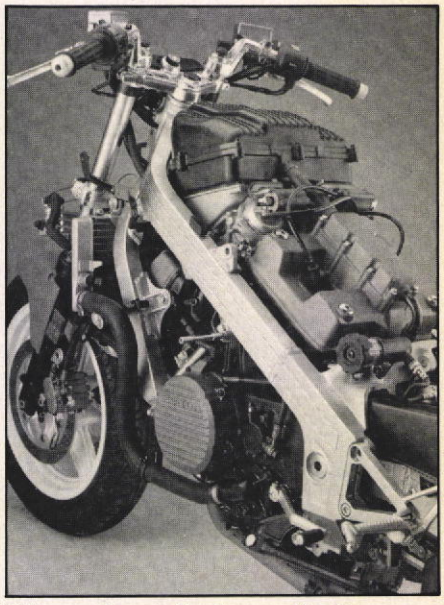
And in the States, the VFR750 will have several smaller siblings, because Honda is covering its bets by producing three new Interceptors: the full-blown 750 you see here, as well as two 700s. The 750 is targeted for AMA Superbike racing, as well as for those riders who prefer their sport undiluted by the ITC and are willing to pay an estimated $500 to $800 to keep it that way. For those with shallower pockets, though, Honda offers two options; one racer-replica 700, with the same round instruments and red-white-and-blue livery as the 750, and another, all-white 700 with rectangular gauges, styled more like the VFR750 sold in Europe.

For this country, though, the real news is that Honda has answered the challenge represented by Yamaha's FZ750 and Suzuki's GSX-R750 with an Interceptor that continues the vee-four tradition of the original. Moreover, Honda is confident of its abilities, at least in regard to the Yamaha. One Honda representative noted that the FZ750 was the target for the new VFR, and, "we'd have to be fools to miss it." Whether or not the 1986 Interceptor winds up as the target for next year's sporting barrage remains to be seen, but one thing is certain: Outdoing the VFR will be simple, but it won't be easy. •



Radiator and oil cooler are aluminum

Keeping a cool head on 105 horsepower.



748cc vee-four are familar specifications

But most other specifics have changed.

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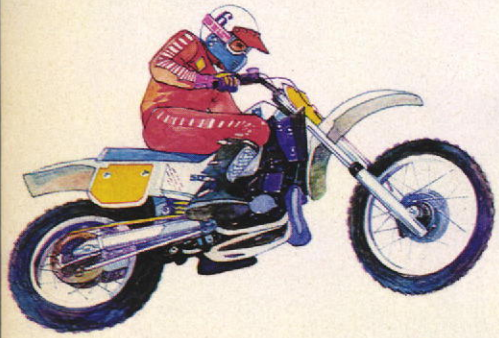

- **Husqvarna 500CR**

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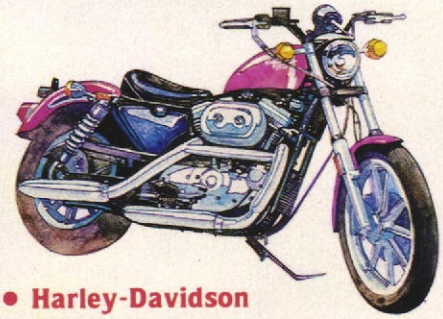

- **Harley-Davidson XLH 883 Sportster**

The best aspects of cruising, past and present. All the tradition of Harley-Davidsons, the original boulevard bombers, coupled with the high-tech features of Harley's new V² Sportster motor.

- **Suzuki GS550ES**

This middleweight's air-cooled, transverse-four DOHC engine and Posi-Damp front fork add up to time-tested performance. Its single rear shock, lightening · fast steering and 572.3cc displacement add up to backroad excitement.

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- **BMW R80**

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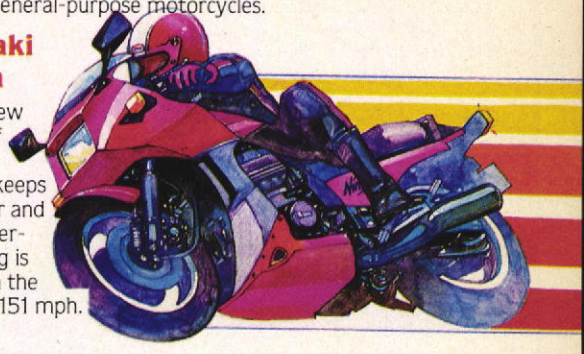
- **Kawasaki 900 Ninja**

First of the new generation of hyperbikes, this one just keeps getting better and better. Its racer-sharp handling is matched with the motor to run 151 mph.



3 SECOND PRIZES

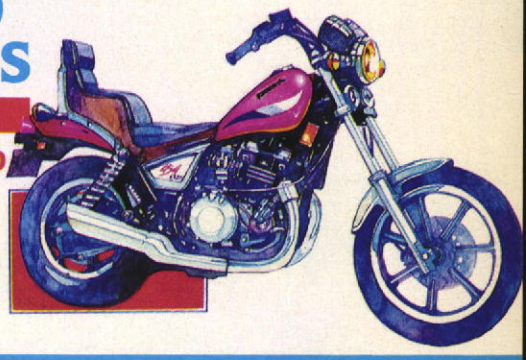
- **Yamaha TT600**

This thumper is a 595cc earthquake on wheels. Its 4-valve, SOHC motor has the power to take on the desert or the woods—and everything in between.

4 THIRD PRIZES

- **Kawasaki 454 LTD**

A middleweight, belt-drive performance-cruiser with an engine based on the 900 Ninja's. It's got the looks of an urban trawler and the heart of a sportbike.



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- **Yoshimura Buddy Bag** Built-in bungee cords attach the bag to bike; a shoulder strap lets you carry it when you're on foot. Two zippered compartments help you organize your gear, while a raincover keeps everything dry. The Buddy Bag is proof in Cordura nylon that you **can** take it with you—comfortably.

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- **Lockhart Griplocks** Replacement grips that provide the ultimate in control, comfort, and protection.

Hold This Page Up To Your Ear And You'll Hear The Big News About The Brand New Arai F-1.

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Arai's new F-1 is really sleek and streamlined. That much you can see. It fits like a glove and has superb new ventilation features. That much you can feel. But the big difference is how much you can't hear. *Because the new F-1 is designed to dramatically reduce the wind noise that can make your ears feel like they're tied to the front of a runaway train.*

It's Arai's unique combination of aerodynamics, faceshield design, a new front spoiler and ear padding that does it. But the F-1 has a lot of other features that are hard to keep quiet about. Like a tough but light Snell '85-approved fiberglass design. A new front louver and top scoop that make Arai's exceptional ventilation system even better. And striking new color combinations with the finish and detailing that Arai helmets are famous for.

So with all the noise that other companies are making about their helmets, remember the new Arai F-1. It shouldn't make much noise at all.

New Top Scoop
Provides even more cooling airflow to the helmet crown. Adjustable to four positions from fully open to fully closed.

Faceshield
Thicker, preformed and curved for better sealing against wind and noise, with a Hard-Coat finish for improved scratch resistance.

New Louver Design
Mounted in EPS (Styrofoam)-lined chinbar, the louver tilts up for added airflow to the face if desired. It is also adjustable for control of airflow.

New Padding
The new padding arrangement in the ear area is designed to further reduce buffeting and wind noise.

New Front Spoiler
Deflects the wind to keep the helmet interior quieter while also helping to prevent helmet lift at speed.

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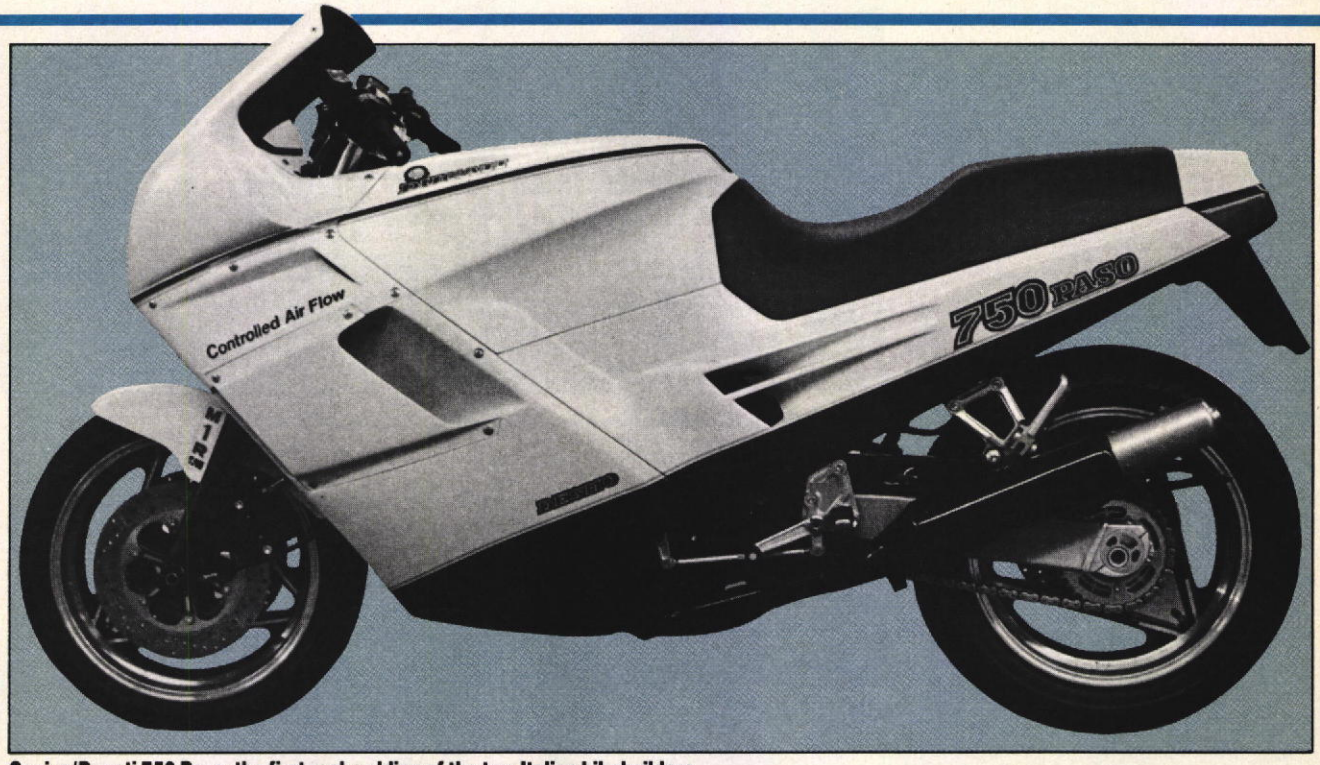
Cycle Guide's Monthly Chronicle of Scoops, Tips, Rumors and Hard Facts

BY LARRY WORKS



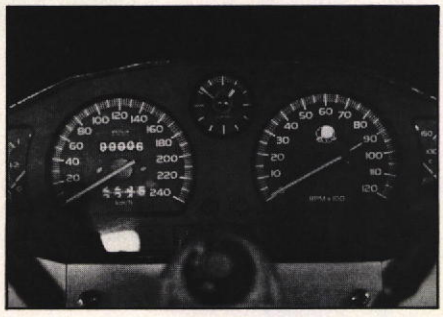
Cagiva/Ducati 750 Paso, the first real melding of the two Italian bikebuilders

Something old, something new—and a result that's very promising.

COMING SOON

• This time of the model year normally fills this column with reports of bikes that are just beginning to crowd last year's best and brightest off the showroom floors. This month, however, the lead item is a bike that is coming, though not quite so soon as the rest of the bikes below. It's the Cagiva/Ducati 750 Paso, and as you can see by the name emblazoned on the tank, Cagiva hasn't forgotten that the name Ducati still means something special to sporting riders. Cagiva also hasn't forgotten that the Ducati *motor* means something to riders, too, and the Paso is powered by an air-cooled, 90 degree SOHC vee-twin whose configuration—and its desmodromic valve gear—should make Ducatiphiles feel right at home. The five-speed, 748cc engine spins to a 10,000-rpm redline, producing a little more than 100 horsepower per liter, according to Cagiva specs.

The Paso isn't just a ride down memory lane, though, and there's plenty to attract a



rider without a Ducati in his background. Twin oil coolers reside inside the Paso's fairing, and triple Brembo discs haul the claimed 374-pound machine to a halt. And if, for some reason, the Paso's flashy bodywork and clip-ons leave any doubt as to the bike's intended purpose, its 25 degree steering head angle—combined with 16-inch wheels and Series 60 high-performance Pirelli radials—should settle the question. This is a sportbike in the finest European tradition, from its Marzocchi anti-dive fork to the single Ohlins shock bolted to the box-section aluminum swingarm.

It's also a look into the near future, too, because if Cagiva's plans work out as predicted, the bike you see here will be an '87 model for U.S. sale, with production beginning right about . . . now.

• As with the Paso, transplanting a time-tested Italian motor into new surroundings was the *raison d'être* for the Magni Le Mans, as well. Created by Arturo Magni of MV Agusta fame, the new home for the Moto Guzzi 1000 Le Mans motor consists of a double-cradle chromoly frame, with twin shocks and a parallelogram-type swingarm. Front suspension is *a la* Forcella Italia, with 40mm-diameter fork tubes and an adjustable anti-dive system. All in all, between the Magni Le Mans' sleek bodywork and monoposto riding position, the Guzzi 90 degree transverse vee-twin looks right at home.

• But maybe these solo-seat roadburners are just too singlemindedly sporty to suit your tastes. Just maybe, you'd like to go for a sedate ride with a passenger. Not to worry, old timer, Bimota has just the answer: the SB5. Sure, sure, the SB5 might look every bit as racy as the Magni and the Paso, but just un-

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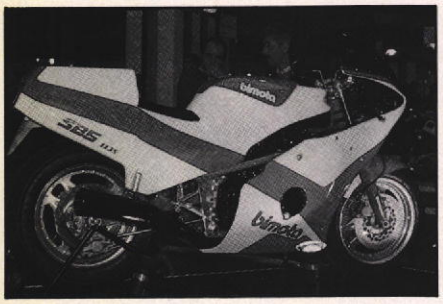
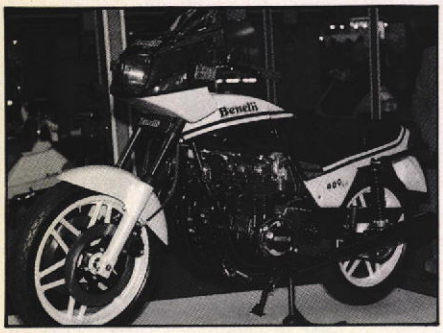


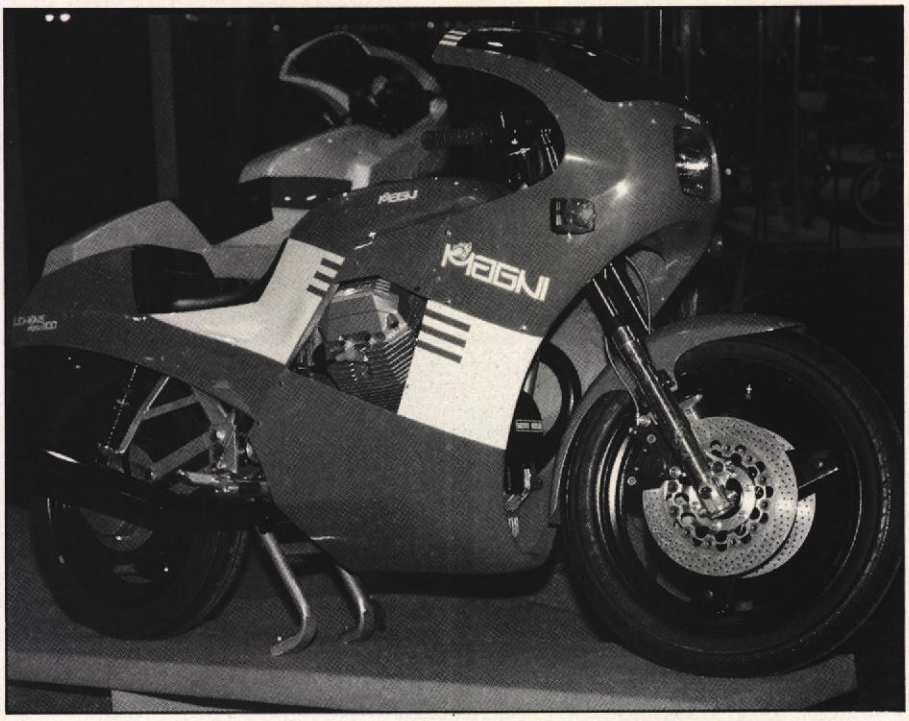
Bimota SB5, basic two-up transportation

For Triple-Nickel commuters.



Benelli Sei 900, an Italian tradition.

A six-pack that reached vintage status.



Magni Le Mans, flashy new digs for 1000cc shaft-drive Moto Guzzi motor

Arturo Magni's vision of the ultimate in vee-twin one-upsmanship.

fasten the fiberglass rear body section and *voilà*, the Quintessential Italian Sportbike becomes your basic, responsible, two-up ride.

Discounting a brief flirtation with dual saddles years ago on the KB1, the 474-pound SB5 is Bimota's first real dalliance with two-upsmanship. Of course, the 115-horsepower Suzuki engine, triple Brembo discs and the high-performance Pirelli radial tires on each of the SB5's 16-inch wheels might blur the distinction between sportbike and basic transportation a bit. And the single-shock, remotely

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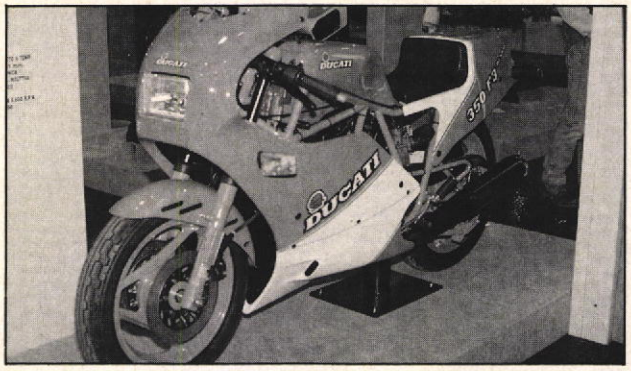
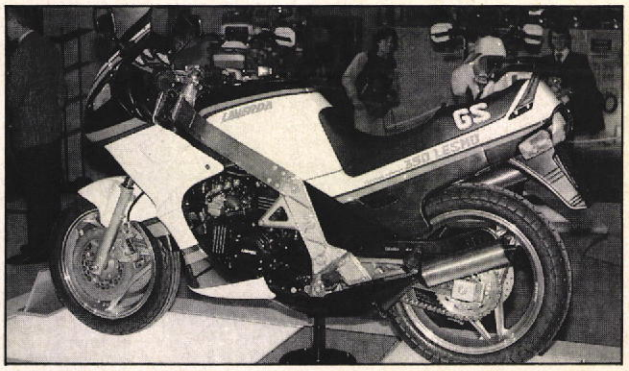


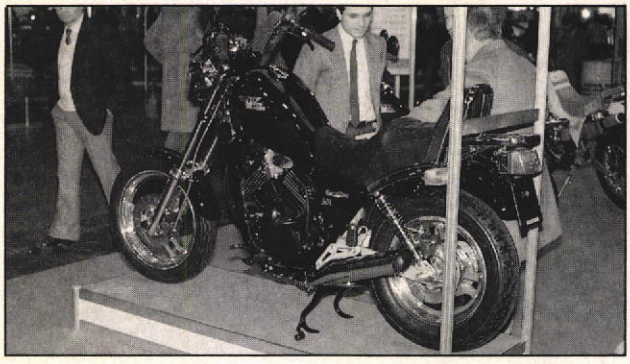
Ducati F3's trestle frame and solo seat are definitely on-track

Somehow, its street-legal lighting seems an afterthought.



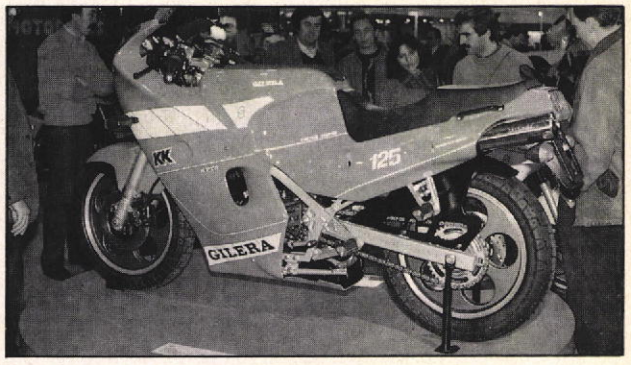
Laverda's GS350 Lesmo triple that we promised you last August

This two-stroke has a promise of its own: 125 mph.



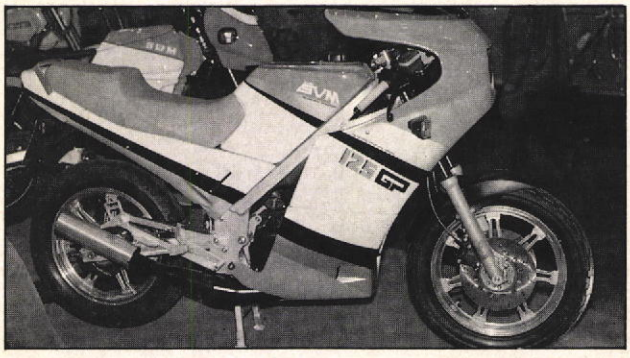
Vee-twin 501 Excalibur is a new direction for Morini

That direction points straight to the U.S.



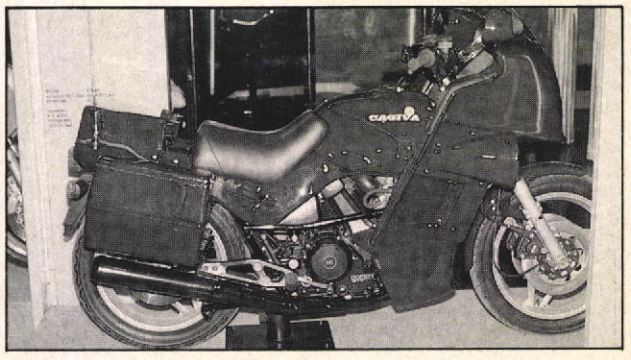
From front to rear, Gilera's KK125 is a model of Italian style

In Italy, "little" streetbikes don't have to look little.



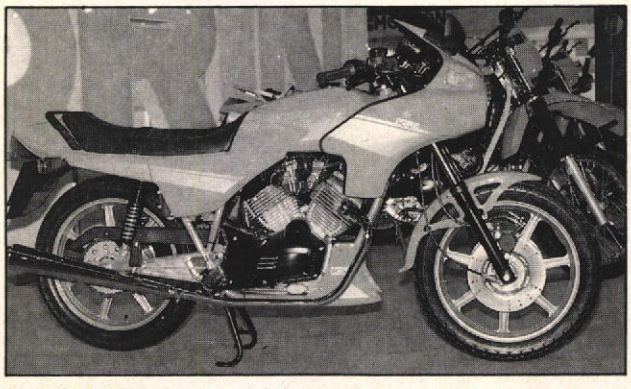
SVM's 125GP is, for the moment, shrouded in mystery

And also, apparently, in high-fashion fiberglass.



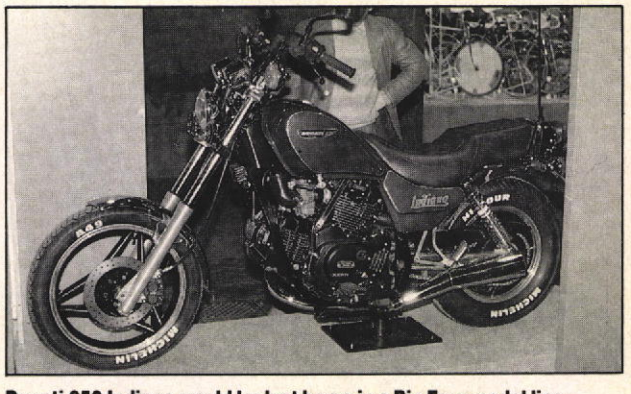
Ducati/Cagiva 750 Police is no run-of-the-mill cop bike

In Italy, even the police ride in high style.



Morini's K2 350 got a nose job for the show

New fairing for the 35-hp vee-twin.



Ducati 650 Indiana would look at home in a Big Four model line

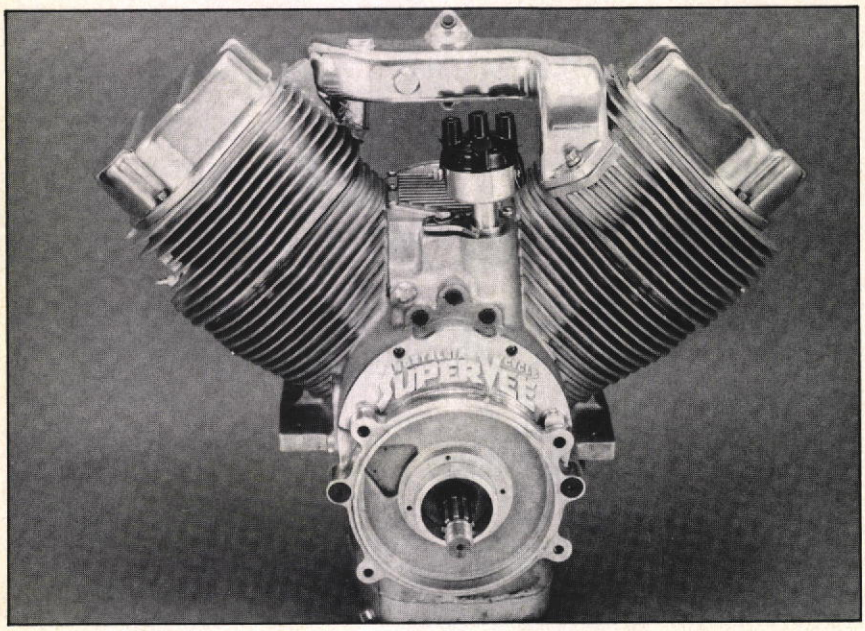
Or even cruising I-40 from Terra Haute to Indianapolis.

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1986 DOUG JACKSON

RIDE/REPORT:

Nostalgia Cycle Super Vee

Born in the USA.



• Out of the dozens of motorcycle manufacturers that existed in America in the early 20th century, only Harley-Davidson remains. And to many riders, H-D's signature vee-twin is the quintessential symbol of American motorcycles. But now there's another American-made vee-twin on the market, and instead of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, this one comes from Huntington Beach, California.

This new vee-twin from the Golden State is made by Nostalgia Cycle (5761 Engineer Drive, Huntington Beach, California 92649), a company that manufactures and sells vintage H-D parts and chopper accessories. Nostalgia's catalog of parts is so complete that it contains virtually everything you need to build a bike from scratch—everything except the *de rigueur* vee-twin engine, that is. So Nostalgia decided to get into the engine business.

First, Nostalgia Cycle designers settled on an air-cooled, tandem vee-twin layout, with pushrod-operated overhead valves. Next, they went beyond the conventional H-D configuration, replacing its individual cylinder heads and detachable cylinders with interchangeable heads and a crankcase with integral cylinders. Finally, to keep the Super Vee's initial cost and subsequent repair bills down, they used exist-

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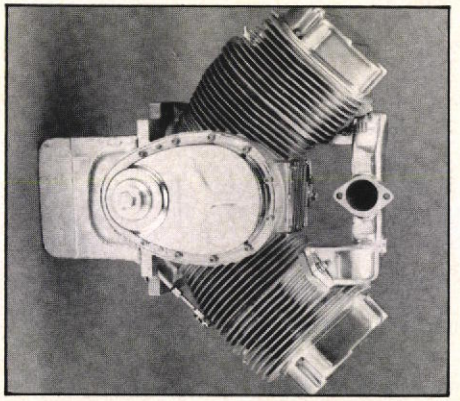
ing parts for the engine's internals. And it's the source of those parts that makes the Super Vee every bit as all-American—and unique—as a Harley-Davidson.

Anyone familiar with Chevrolets will feel right at home working on a Super Vee, because virtually every one of the vee-twin engine's internals—rods, bearings, pistons, rings, pushrods, hydraulic lifters, rocker arms, valves, valve guides, oil pump, timing chain and sprockets—comes straight from a Chevy 350-cubic-inch V-8. Even the Super Vee's specially



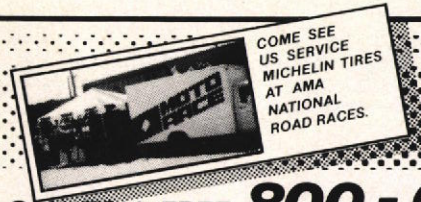
cast crankshaft resembles the front crank throw of its Chevy counterpart.

The Super Vee shares something else with the 350 V-8: Its bore (4.0 inches) and stroke (3.75 inches) are the same as the big V-8's, giving the twin a whopping 1543cc of displacement, and making it the largest mass-produced vee-twin made in America. Despite the two huge 771.5cc pistons, though, Nostalgia Cycle claims the Super Vee's light crankshaft, unfettered by the large flywheels of a Harley, allows the engine to spin quickly and safely to more than 7000 rpm.

Although the newest vee-twin in America is taking aim at the oldest, it's nevertheless designed to put its power to the ground through a stock Harley Big Twin clutch and transmission. The stock Big Twin frame can be used, as well, although the Super Vee's wider cylinder spread (90 degrees, twice the H-D's spread) requires some frame modifications.

But even though there's a 45 degree difference between a Super Vee and a Harley-Davidson on the outside—not to mention all those transplanted Chevrolet parts on the inside—Nostalgia Cycle is betting that vee-twin enthusiasts will have only a small degree of difficulty in taking the Super Vee to their hearts, because among other things, Nostalgia claims, the engine is so practical. After all, if you've got an old Chevy in the backyard, chances are you've got enough parts to rebuild a Super Vee *four* times.

—*Jerry Smith*



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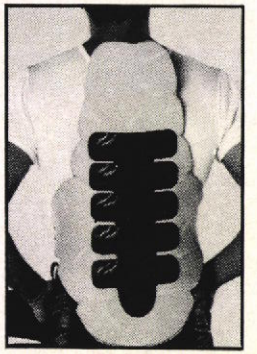

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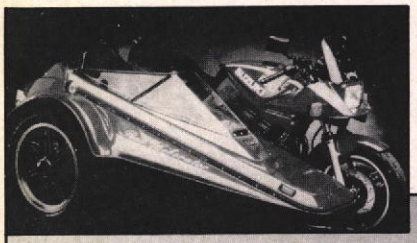

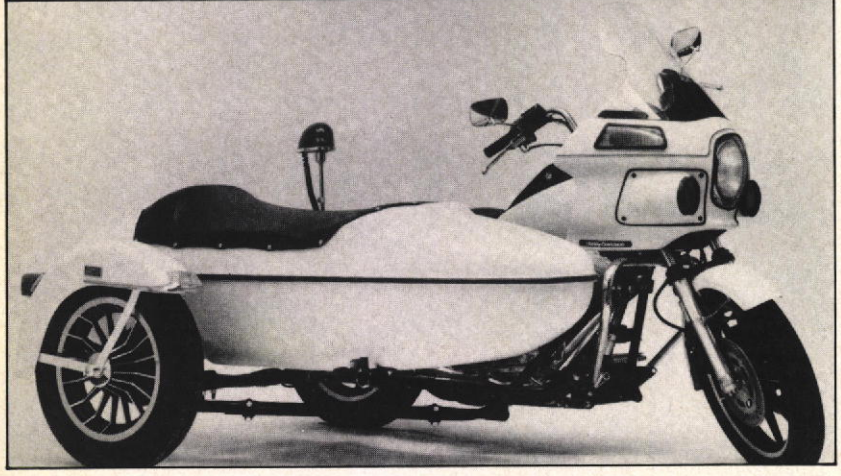

• Reports of the demise of the sidecar are not only premature, they're backward. In fact, three-wheel rigs seem to be perpetually hanging on the verge of a comeback to popularity. Such a return probably will cover the full spectrum of designs, too, from the past, present and future. And three just-introduced rigs outline that spectrum nicely.

The first has a bathtub shape that should look familiar. It's Harley-Davidson's RLE, a remake of the classic CLE, but with mounting hardware updated to fit 1982 and later FXE-series Harleys.

As much as the RLE represents sidecar tradition, Fritz Egli's first venture into the world of three wheels, the Red Libhherator, is an example of current sidecar-think. But Egli's device looks almost as familar as the RLE, and with reason: It's an apparent clone of the star-crossed Vetter Terraplane.

The third of the trio neatly pinpoints the future of sidecars—or at least, one possible future. The Domani, Krauser's experimental K100-powered rig, seems to share little more than total number of tire contact patches with either the RL or RLE. Actually, though, it's the ability to haul a passenger to the side that unites these disparate designs, as well as the lack of a traditional motorocycle accoutrement—the sidestand.

—Larry Works

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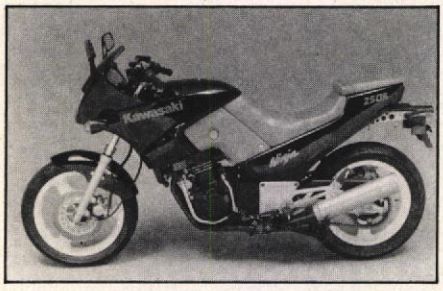
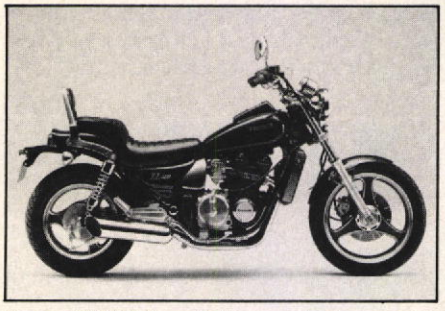
Voyager XII looks familiar, but isn't

This tourer's motor is all new.



New look for Ninjas in the 250cc class

A foothold for 250cc sportbikes here.



Kawasaki ZL600, a midsize musclebike

Call it the eliminated Eliminator.

adjustable rear end, remote-adjust front fork with 40mm-diameter tubes, and 5.8-gallon fuel tank might speak more to endurance racing than to a spin down to the Burger Barn, but remember, the SB5 still has that dual seat. This is obviously nothing more than a snappy commuter special. Sure it is—all the way up to its claimed 161-plus top speed.

• All this show of new Italian hardware might just well convince you that the Italian moto industry has all but pitched tradition in search of ever-new, ever-faster hardware. While there's unquestionably plenty of of new machinery (see Milan Show, page 39), tradition still has its . . . well, traditional place in the Italobike industry. As an example, consider the Benelli Sei, named for its six-cylinder powerplant. The current production Sei has little more than a quarter-fairing, seat rail and black pipes to distinguish it from the 900 Sei of the mid-'70s. Not much has changed beneath the bodywork, either; the 905cc engine produces a claimed 80 horsepower at 8400 rpm. That's a paltry figure by today's hyperbike standards, but enough, reportedly, to push the 485-pound Sei to 134 mph.

Continued

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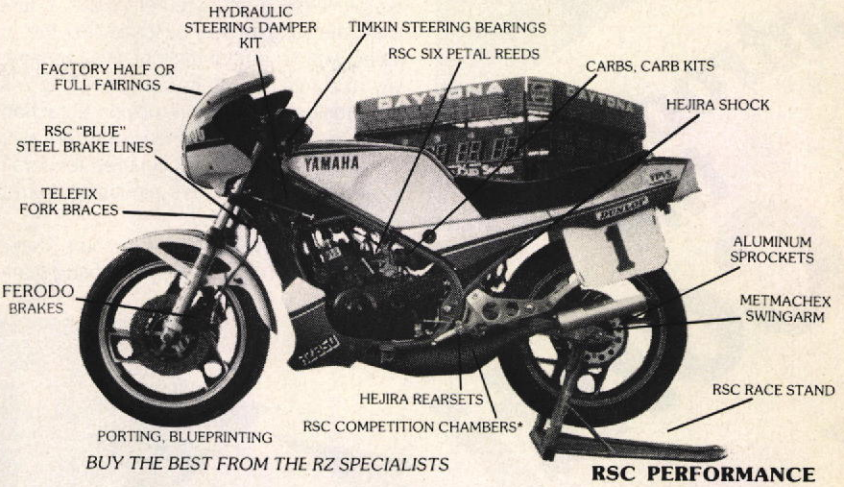

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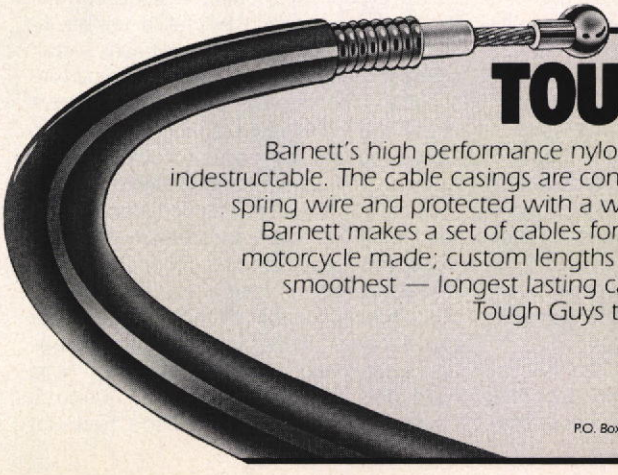

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The Assault Cruiser Tire

GUIDE LINES *Continued*

• After the Italian Brigade, a cool dip in the motorcycle mainstream might prove refreshing. For starters, Kawasaki's gone public for 1986, and in addition to a full array of paint-and-tape models and returnees from last year's line, there are a few new machines as well. Topping the list—though it might well be overshadowed by its sport-touring garage-mate—is the Voyager XII.

At first glance the XII's liquid-cooled, shaft-driven, DOHC, 1196cc engine might seem to be nothing more than the KZ1300 engine with a cylinder lopped off each side, but that's hardly the case. The two powerplants share neither bore, stroke nor number of valves per cylinder. In fact, the 16-valve XII, with its dual counterbalancers, hydraulic valve-lash adjusters and four semi-flat-slide CV carbs, shares only the superficial resemblance of finless cases with the KZ1300's motor. But while its engine is somewhat higher-tech than the 1300's, the XII is a notch down in long-haul appointments; the newest Voyager arrives replete with the now-requisite radio/cassette unit, but it lacks the larger bike's trip computer, as well as nearly 140 pounds of the 1300's assorted touring largesse. Still, at a claimed 700 pounds, the XII might prove to be just the right size—to replace the Voyager 1300 in Kawasaki's 1987 lineup.

• Sharing the long-haul tasks in Kawasaki's 1986 lineup is the Concours, reported as the GTR1000 in last month's Coming Soon. The Concours, powered by a milder, shaft-drive version of the Ninja 1000's 16-valve DOHC motor, gained more than a new designation since that first report: It also gained about 36 pounds; Kawasaki's claimed weight for this executive-class sport-tourer is 586 pounds. The Concours, while not loaded to the gunwales with long-haul trickery, still manages a few nice touches of its own, including a luggage rack exposed by removing a section of the rear fender, radial tires (from an as-yet-unnamed supplier) and oversized fenders designed to keep a rider's pinstripes from becoming mud-spattered.

• The new Voyager and Concours make a handy one-two punch for the touring market, but they don't begin to touch the musclebike/cruiser end of the motorcycle spectrum. For that market segment, Kawasaki's new line includes the ZL600, a conceptual head-on collision between last year's Eliminator and Ninja 600R. The result is a 428-pound street cruiser with a 593cc Ninja motor that's been tamed with smaller carbs and a redesigned, baloney-slice exhaust system. And while its 15-inch rear tire and stepped-seat, urban-trawler styling make its inspiration clear, the sidecovers read ZL600, not Eliminator.

• That situation is neatly reversed with another new Kawasaki, in that the sidecover reads "Ninja," while the rest of the package differs from the 16-valve, inline-four Ninja mold. This one is the Ninja 250, which is powered by a liquid-cooled vertical twin. But while the 250's motor doesn't match the other Ninjas in configuration, its eight valves and six-speed gearbox should pass as sporting credentials. And in terms of running gear, the half-faired, 304-pound 250 is smack in the middle of the Ninja camp: Automatic Variable Damping System fork, 16-inch wheels at both ends, and an aluminum, linkage-type Uni-Trak rear suspension.

• Like Kawasaki, Suzuki's '86 lineup predominately consists of returning models—with a few notable exceptions. Other than the much-reported GSX-R series, there's also the 650 Savage (see last month's Rumors column). This 652cc, four-speed thumper is the sole of simplicity on the surface, but there's a fair amount of technology working behind the scenes to maintain that appearance. In addition to the Savage's belt final drive and TSCC four-valve head, this big single has electric starting, with an electromagnetically activated decompression device that kicks in when the starter is activated. And, like the Suzuki Intruder, the Savage can be had with either a flat, drag-type handlebar (shown) or a taller, wider pullback style. That choice is icing on the cake, but it probably isn't the major attraction. The Savage is intended as an entry-level bike, and it carries a modern-day bargain-basement price tag: $1999.

• Clearly at the other end of Suzuki's model line—at least in terms of cash ante—is a new version of the Cavalcade series, the LXE.

Like both the LX and standard Cavalcade, the LXE is pushed down the highway by a liquid-cooled, shaft-drive, 16-valve, 82 degree vee-four. And like the LX, the LXE features a full sound system, electronic cruise control, auto-leveling suspension—and a passenger-leveling inflatable seat bladder for the passenger. But where the LX stops, the top-of-the-line LXE model is just getting warmed up. The specifics of that warming trend include such passenger accoutrements as a headrest adjustable for both angle and height, and dual rear speakers with a fader control. For the rider, the LXE provides color-matched, vented fairing lowers with built-in cornering lights, an inflatable seat, and useful exterior cases for maps, coins and cassettes. As a final touch, the LXE includes an exterior decor package that consists of chrome brightwork on just about all of the available surfaces that aren't painted, vinyl, rubber—or chromed already.

FEDERAL CASES

• The anti-55 forces never seem to rest these days, and the Citizens' Coalition for Rational Traffic Laws reports that California has passed a resolution petitioning the U.S. Congress to allow individual states to set their own freeway speed limits. Reasons given in the resolution for dispensing with the Double Nickel included California's deteriorating adherence to the national speed limit, and the statement that pursuing freeway scofflaws was drastically diverting the CHP from other, more important, tasks.

• In other news on the national speed limit, Arizona, a state with initiative and referendum options, might well get the Double Nickel on the ballot in 1986. The Committee For Efficient Transportation in that state reportedly has until early July to get the necessary 73,000 signatures to force a vote on the repeal issue.

• Every bit as hot as the 55 question is that of helmets. Some want them on, some want them off; in this case, Cosmopolitan motors wants them off—specific ones, at least. That firm recently notified the NHTSA of a voluntary recall on some AGV helmets. The affected models are CX5000, CX2000 and KR2000 series helmets made in Italy, which were manufactured before February 1984, and which lack a DOT sticker. The helmets should be returned to Cosmopolitan Motors Inc., 301 Jacksonville Road, Hatboro, Pennsylvania 19040. The helmets will be examined by Cosmopolitan's Quality Control department, and any that can't be changed to conform with DOT specs will be replaced.

• As a final note for those Down Under, Australian riders reportedly will no longer be required to display a front license plate. The front plates, government mandated to be mounted atop the front fender, have been found to pose safety problems in the event of a crash.

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RUMORS

• There are times when the rumor mill simply idles down to a standstill, when even wild-eyed sources dry up, when absolutely nothing can be found hidden under a sheet in the back room of the R&D buildings, times when all the manufacturers are only too happy to show that their corporate sleeves hold no surprises. Fortunately, this isn't one of those times. There is, for instance, the talk of how elements of the experimental ESM2 streetbike, built for Britain's Department of Transport, have drawn rabid interest from moto-manufacturers around the world. Sources Over There report that while the bike's anti-lock braking and advanced leg protection have gotten engineers to sit up straight and pay attention, the bike's air bag safety system has produced the most sheets of graph paper crammed with notes. There are even those cynics who claim that if the ESM2's air bag can prove itself, a balloonbike might well be in your future.

• Also from the land of oiled wool and warm beer comes word of an unusual spearhead—one in the form of a British-made Jawa 500 thumper. Our men in the shadows report that the bike will be powered by a five-speed Rotax motor, and will serve as an interim model, until the details of a half-liter flat-twin are settled.

Continued

Make News When You Cruise

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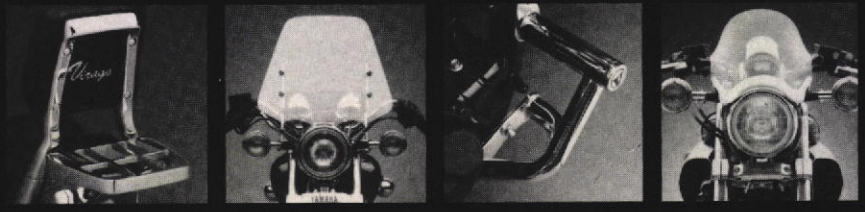

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Reportedly, the bike is being built specifically to pass U.S. EPA emissions tests, and to prepare the U.S. market for future models.

• Past issues have had mention of a new Vespa distributor, and how the scooter wars between Vespa and Lambretta might be heating up again. The latest bit of gossip on the subect is that Vespa might have more than just tiny-wheelers to throw into the fray. In a wild tale currently making the rounds of the conversation pit-vipers, there's talk that Vespa might also arm its U.S. distributor with a quarter-liter sportbike, the NGR250, and a 125cc trailbike.

• And just so you don't exit this month's collection of gossip and whispers with the sense that the only rumors center on far-off safety concerns and bikes that will show up in miniscule numbers if they ever do materialize, consider this tale of a major manufacturer—Honda to be precise. The story here is that a long-rumored, long-denied Honda sidecar project has been leapfrogged, so to speak. While no one at Honda is yet willing to come forward, there are indications from a variety of sources that Honda is working on a new three-wheeler for the U.S. market. Nothing new, you say? Perhaps, but what makes this item so intriguing is that it reportedly will be street-legal.

HARD CASH

• An item that's shown up repeatedly in this column in the past few months has been the ongoing story of Norton Villiers Triumph Co. The firm's Norton Motors division has made news with rumors of civilian sale of the Rotary Interpol, and with the announcement of renewed—though limited—production of the 850 Commando. All that activity hasn't gone unnoticed in the business world, and now there's talk that new life at the Birmingham, England, plant has attracted interest in a takeover. Norton's keeping a lid on the details for the moment, but the takeover bid reportedly covers the entire company, not just the motor division.

• It's no secret that product-liability litigation in the United States is a situation out of control. Nowhere is that condition more evident than the motorcycle helmet business, which has seen 25 U.S. helmet manufactuers dwindle to six. Those firms often are the targets for suits that apparently have little or no legal or factual basis, expensive suits whose costs inevitably are passed on to the consumer.

Now, however, the free ride might be slowing, even if it hasn't come to a full stop. Bell Helmets, which has been the defendant in numerous groundless product-liability suits, has filed a counterclaim against a Pennsylvania plaintiff in a suit Bell contends has no basis in law or fact, and which, company spokesmen allege, constitutes abuse of the legal system. Such a move is expensive for Bell in the short run, but if it proves successful, it might slow the flood of suits against helmetmakers to a trickle, saving all of us a little hard cash.

Continued

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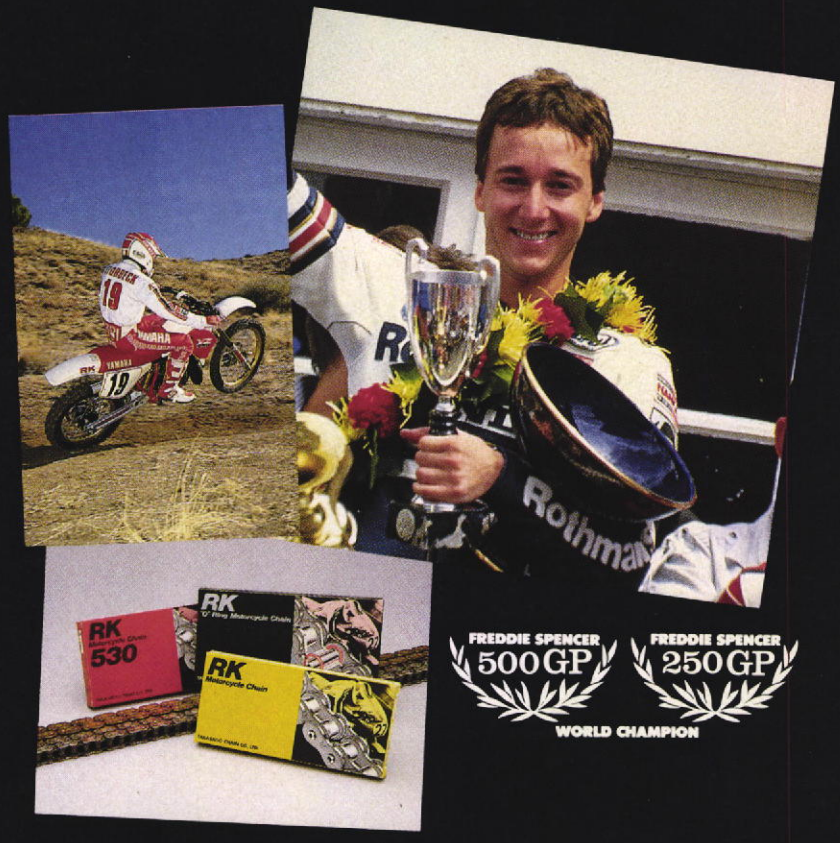

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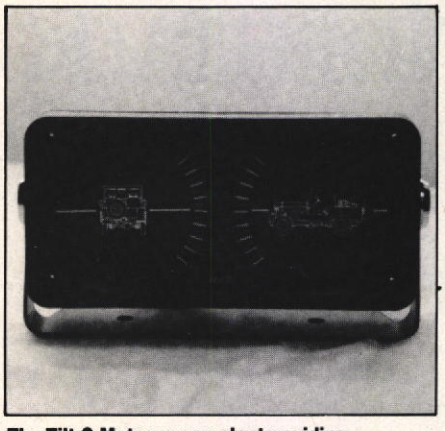
APART FROM THE CROWD

• In what just might a perfect example of trying to stuff 10 pounds of dirt into a 5-pound bag, a French engineer has shoehorned an FZ750 engine into a XT600 frame. Ultimately, the project might yield a Paris-Dakar entrant, and if it does, it will live as a monument to one man's ingenuity; reportedly, this unusual project was conceived and accomplished with no help from Yamaha.

• You've probably heard the story of how the then-new Chevrolet Nova wasn't selling well in certain markets, predominantly in Spanish-speaking countries. The reason, as the tale unfolds, is the translation of Nova: "doesn't go"—clearly a death knell to the sales potential of a car. With that as a primer, we shift to a related example in the motorcycle world—but with a dash of color added.

Cagiva now markets a 650 dual-purpose bike in the U.S. called the Elefant. When the bike first cleared U.S. Customs, it arrived in stark, Refrigerator White, instantly branding it, in some circles, anyway, as a white elephant. Sources inside Cagiva reported to the factory in Italy that in English, white elephant connotes a venture that turns out to be a failure, or a possession that's a financial burden to maintain. The Italian contingent shot back with a different interpretation: In Italy, the white elephant is a symbol of luck. But apparently, Cagiva's taking not taking any chances with the 650. The current version of the Elefant for sale in the United States was changed to blue—with just a bit of white trim.

• From time to time, you might have read in this magazine of how a rider's ability to lean a motorcycle is limited by his personal Tilt-O-Meter. At the time, the description of that particular instrument might have seemed apocryphal, just a turn of phrase. Wrong, very wrong. To prove the existance of such a device, here's an actual photograph of the Erka Clinometer, a 12-volt Tilt-O-Meter, if you will, that displays vehicle inclination, both front-to-rear and side-to-side. And all this time you probably thought we were joking. •



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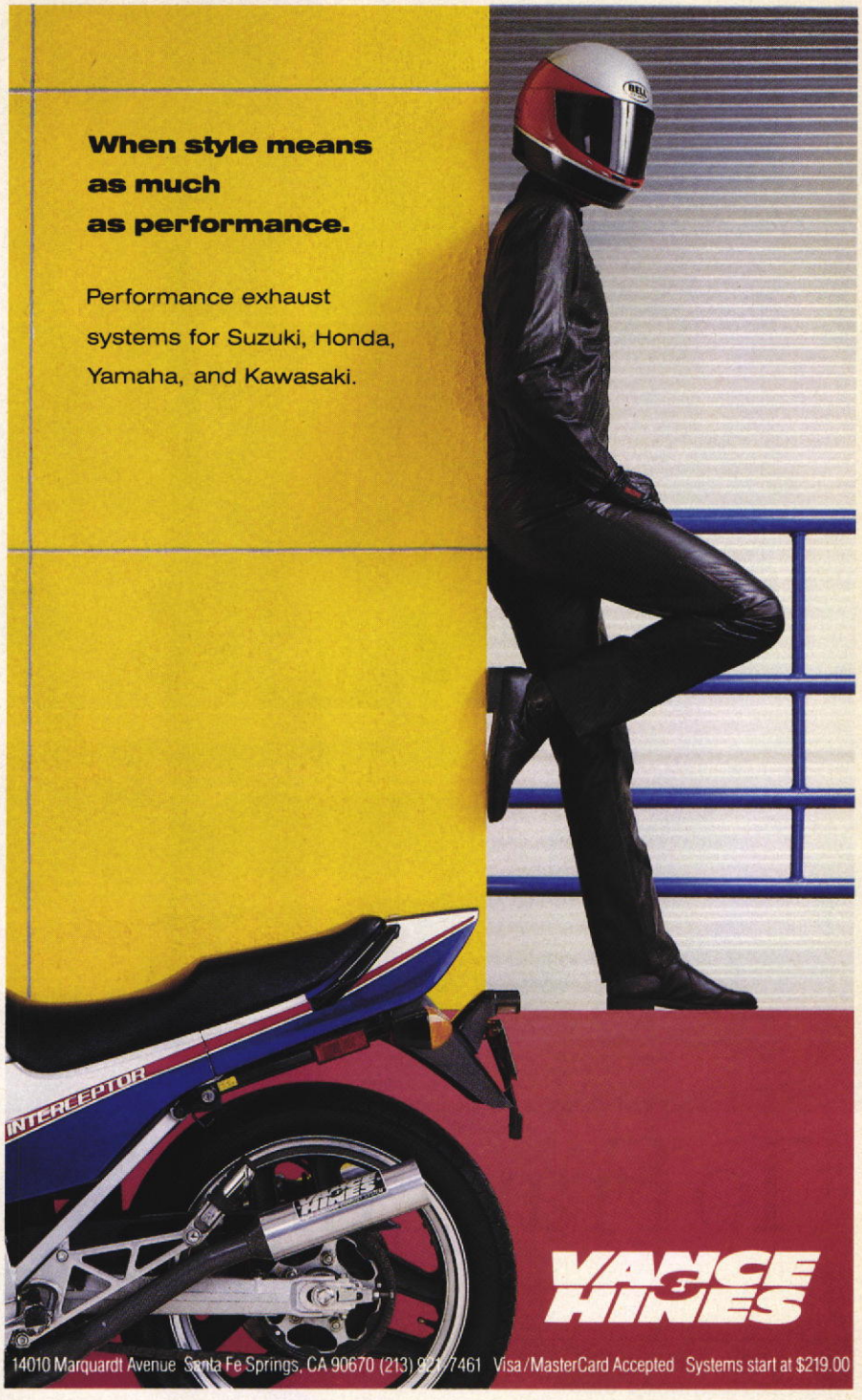
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Fram engineers know that motorcycle engines turn higher RPM and run hotter than virtually any other power plant. These loads and temperatures mean that clean oil is essential to engine life. Tiny microscopic bits of dirt, debris and wear metals act as abrasives that grind up your engine if left to circulate in your oil. The faster and hotter your engine runs the quicker the wear process occurs.

Fram has a high performance solution —the new Fram motorcycle oil filter. It has been specially developed for motorcycle engines, using one of the finest filter media available, to ensure your oil stays its cleanest, mile after mile. The new Fram filter will contribute a lot to your engine's life and put many miles between you and an overhaul. And while no oil filter will make your engine run *faster*, the Fram filter will help it run its best—*longer*!

Long distance touring means extra wear if your oil is not its cleanest

Touring riders will really appreciate the effectiveness of the new Fram motorcycle filter. Obviously, a lot of miles means extra wear if your oil isn't "Fram clean". And if you carry heavy loads or haul a trailer, a Fram motorcycle filter is low cost "life insurance" against a major repair caused by dirty oil.

High RPM sport riding stresses your engine to its limits

Hard core "kneedraggers" who run their machines "full throttle" one second and "full engine braking" the next, *know* that they are using their engine to its maximum stress limits. Clean oil here helps prevent

means "longer" not "faster."

reason to buy a premium oil filter.

galling, seizure and excessive wear. And if a foreign piece of material does break loose, you want to be *sure* it is stopped by your filter, before it damages the engine.

In-town cruising means your engine runs its hottest

Unless you actually race your motorcycle in competition, it will never run hotter than when you cruise through town on a warm day. Stoplight to stoplight your engine gets hotter and hotter. Clearances get tight and excessive wear can occur if your oil isn't cleaned by the new Fram motorcycle filter.

Fram is world renowned as the most trusted name in filtration. Fram's bright orange box is your assurance of technological leadership and the highest quality. Next oil change, see your motorcycle dealer or retailer and ask for the premium Fram high performance oil filter for motorcycles. Tell him you want to pay a little now instead of a lot later. He'll understand.

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ALLIED

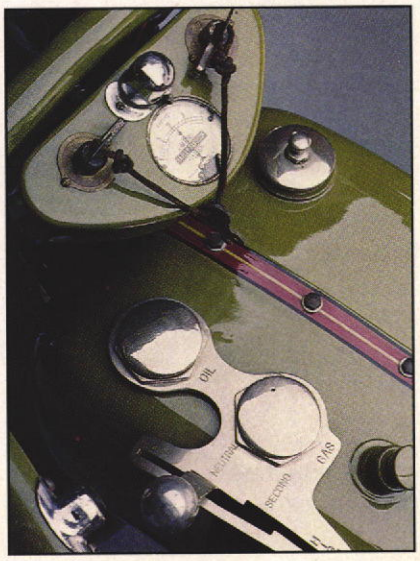
VINTAGE BIKE:

1929 Harley-Davidson Speedy Two Cam Twin

Tradition and exhilaration combined to produce a classic.

Some 60 years ago, Yankee-built motorcycles ruled the American riding world, with such companies as Excelsior, Indian, Ace, Cleveland and Henderson battling for sales. Motorcycling flourished during those years, but then the Great Depression stomped its course through the United States, and, one by one, American motorcycle manufacturers succumbed. Today, only Harley-Davidson remains, its history characterized by a conservative, evolutionary approach, rather than a radical, revolutionary one.

Although Harley-Davidson's Speedy Two Cam Twin, produced in 1928 and '29, predates Milwaukee's current policy, it still dovetailed neatly with H-D's evolutionary philosophy. The Two Cammer descended directly from the Milwaukee concern's first 45-degree, 61-cubic-inch vee-twin that was introduced in 1909; in 1922, that engine evolved into a 74-cubic-incher. But throughout its life, the Big Twin motor—which had an overhead intake valve and side exhaust valve—was known as the "F-head" or "pocket valve" engine. The F-head certainly wasn't innovative, instead merely reflective of engine design of that period.



Innovation appeared, however, when Harley unveiled the 1922 Big Twins in J and JD model designations (8.68 and 9.5 claimed horsepower, respectively). And, soon afterwards, the factory also rolled out a twin-cam version of the standard single-cam Big Twin—but only for dirt and velodrome racing circuits. That special motor chalked up a succession of racing victories, even though Harley-Davidson's support of racing was just becoming a factor in the sport.

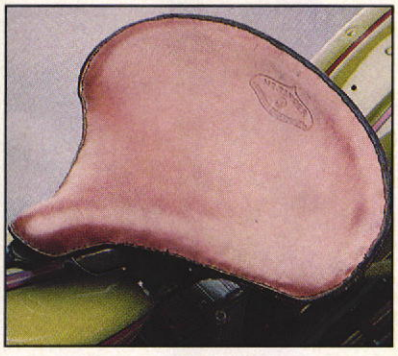
High-performance technology trickled down to the street-riding public in 1928, when the expensive ($370) Speedy Two Cam Twin made its debut. Designated the JDH, the bike had aluminum-alloy Dow metal pistons, rather than the previous Big Twin's iron slugs, and was advertised as being "souped with speed, power and acceleration." Furthermore, the JDH had separate cams for each cylinder, a feature the factory said allowed

Vee-twin motor and rubber-covered floorboards are still Harley staples

Not so the heel-and-toe clutch pedal and cast-iron heads and barrels.

more exact valve timing and thus more power. Despite those lofty claims, though, Harley-Davidson still rated the JDH at only 9.5 horsepower—the same power output as the JD.

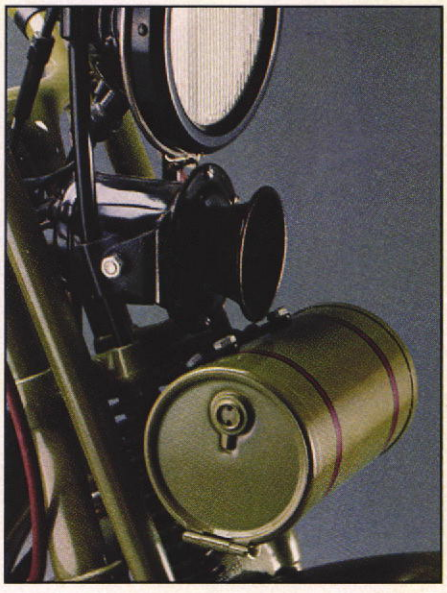
Harley didn't stray too far from convention, though, and for good reason. In those days, the public regarded overly innovative designs with distrust. So although Harley-Davidson touted the bike's new features—front brake, carburetor air cleaner, generator-output controller and new electrical panel—the company's evolutionary progress was better measured in inches than in miles. Lubrication, for example retained the primitive form of a variable, throttle-controlled, total-loss system, which usually gave the rider a choice between fouled plugs or inadequate oiling. The suspension system consisted of a leading-link, coil-spring front end, and rider "comfort" was further assisted by a spring that ran the length of the seat post. Two bullet-shape headlights could spotlight cows in the roadway at night, and Harley's "Clear The Way" horn was positive insurance that the highway indeed would be cleared. And, for those who aspired to the low-and-lean, daredevil look, Harley-Davidson offered optional 25-inch-diameter balloon tires in place of the stock 27-inch-diameter equipment.



But the Two Cammer's appeal—and, eventually, its legendary status—was derived from more than just the bike's specifications. The Two Cam Twin was the hard-metal incarnation of Harley's traditionalism and excitement in the era before the Great Depression. The Speedy, which gave way to Harley's new side-valve twins in 1930, became a redoubtable relic on racing circuits, its brutish powerplant reigning supreme for many years, vanquishing Indians and even Harley-Davidson's own VL-series racers. Such was the power of the Speedy Two Cam that it won races well into the 1940s, helping to perpetuate the Two Cam's mystique, and carving a respectable niche in the annals of motorcycling history. ●

Evolutionary process eliminated hand shifter and leading-link fork

But split fuel tank has become a custom trademark.



PEOPLE AREN'T BORN WIT
BMW'S. THEY DEVELOP

Most motorcycles are purchased after a ten-minute test ride.

Most BMW's are purchased after a test ride that's lasted for years. And probably began on some entirely different brand of bike.

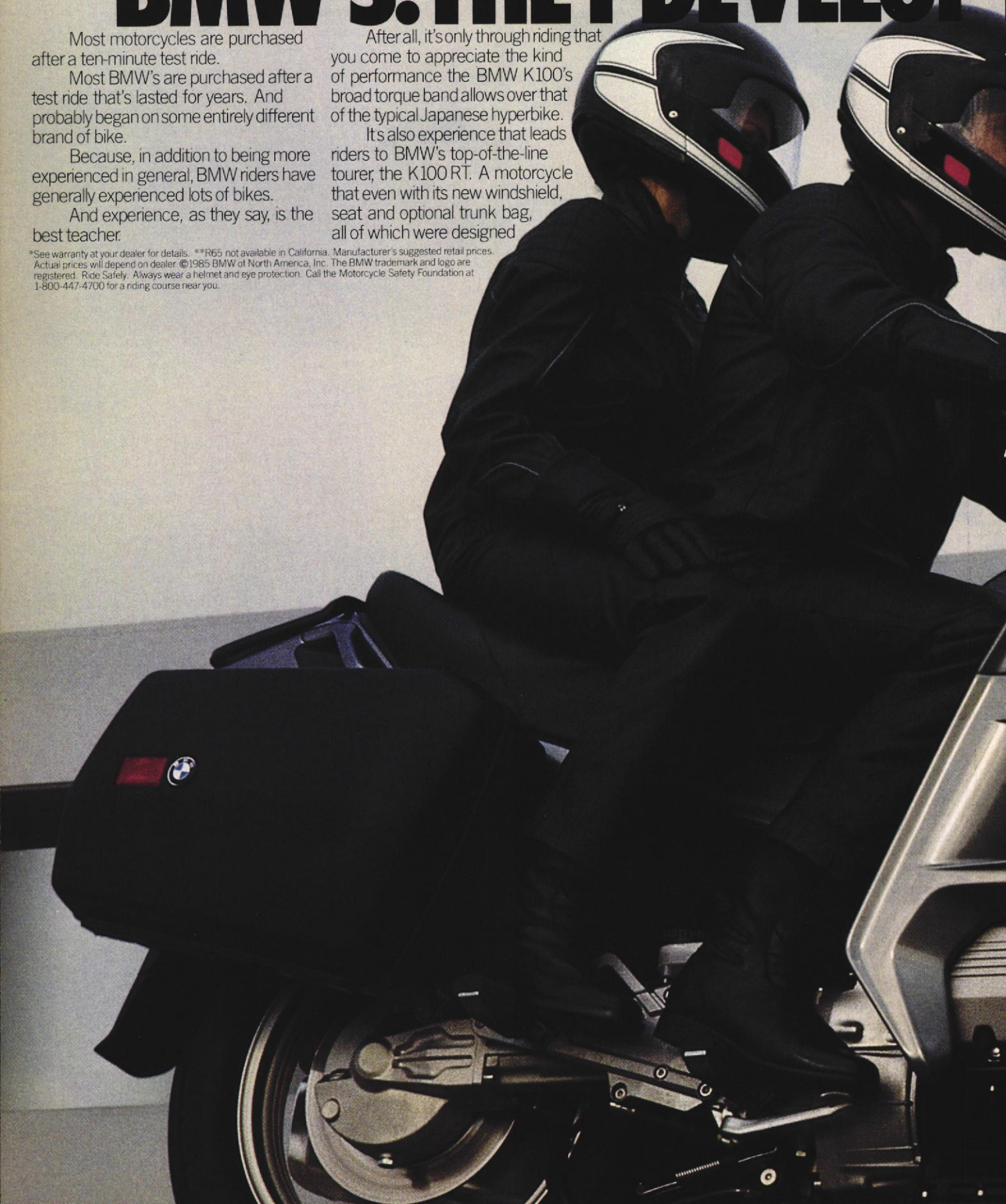
Because, in addition to being more experienced in general, BMW riders have generally experienced lots of bikes.

And experience, as they say, is the best teacher.

After all, it's only through riding that you come to appreciate the kind of performance the BMW K100's broad torque band allows over that of the typical Japanese hyperbike.

It's also experience that leads riders to BMW's top-of-the-line tourer, the K100 RT. A motorcycle that even with its new windshield, seat and optional trunk bag, all of which were designed

*See warranty at your dealer for details. **R65 not available in California. Manufacturer's suggested retail prices. Actual prices will depend on dealer. ©1985 BMW of North America, Inc. The BMW trademark and logo are registered. Ride Safely. Always wear a helmet and eye protection. Call the Motorcycle Safety Foundation at 1-800-447-4700 for a riding course near you.



TH AN APPRECIATION FOR IT RIDING OTHER BIKES.

especially for American riders, still weighs far less than any of its competitors, one of which someone once described as "a rolling accessory display."

And trial and error is how most riders come to the conclusion that any bike worthy of BMW's 3-year, unlimited mileage warranty,* the industry's longest, is bound to be less of a trial.

Curiously though, whereas experienced buyers usually pay less for their purchases, BMW buyers seem happy to pay a little more, from $3,800 for the R65 to $7,650 for the K100 RT.**

But then, most of these riders are planning on keeping their BMW motorcycles for a long time. And as one writer for Cycle magazine put it, "What's six grand when you're talking about long-term compatibility?" Especially with BMW factory financing and leasing readily available.

But, of course, the best way to appreciate all of this is to visit your BMW dealer for a thorough test ride. A test only years of riding can prepare you for.

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PRODUCT EVALUATION:

Spartan Coldweather Suit

Proper attire for the rides of spring.

• March signifies more than just the first days of spring; it's a time when road fever replaces cabin fever. Yet when the open highways beckon, you often get the cold shoulder. Spartan strikes back against chilly March winds with its Coldweather Riding Suit, the firm's first one-piece outfit, intended to offer you shelter from the last throes of winter.

To keep March's ill-wind at bay, the suit relies on a layered construction, with 8-ounce polyester insulation under an outer shell of 210-denier nylon. To help keep water from saturating the insulation, the outer shell is sprayed with 3/4-ounce, water-repellant storm coating, and the inside is covered with a layer of thin plastic. Spartan didn't stop its concern over the weather there, though. A full-length YKK zipper seals

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1986 VIC HUBER

Spartan's winter suit offers cold-weather protection in one-piece design

And its water-repellant construction keeps you comfy, come rain or shine.

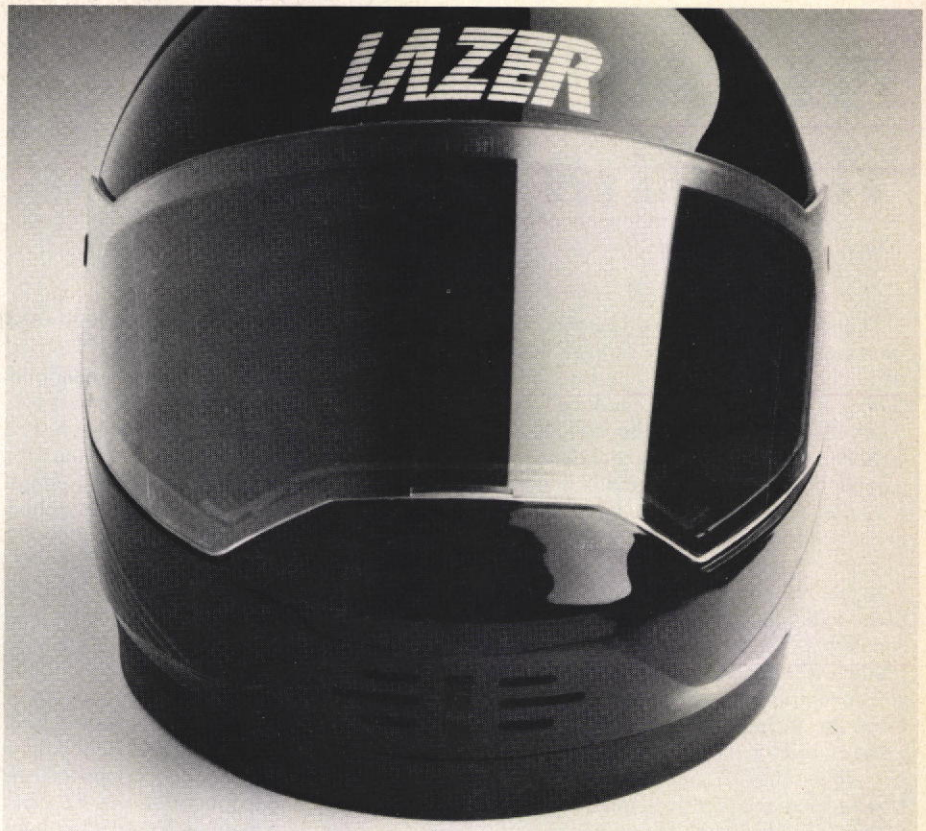
the front of the suit all the way from the neckline to the crotch, and a Velcro-secured flap behind the zipper provides a second line of defense. Velcro strips on the sleeve cuffs and leg bottoms also help ensure that drafts stay outside, and stirrups at each cuff keep the pant legs down and cold air out. A pair of adjustable belts—one on each side—work with the elasticized waistband to keep the suit's midsection tight and draft-free. What's more, the collar is lined with a strip of soft corduroy, and its height helps reduce chills.

Spartan's suit combines that basic layered construction with a number of features that help make the suit easy to live with day to day. Four pockets on the front of the suit—secured by Velcro flaps—provide space for bandanas and maps. Spartan steps away from the ordinary, though, with an innovative small pocket sewn vertically on the left sleeve that provides a convenient place to stow tollway change. Spartan also reaches into the *right* pocket for the suit's design. The leg zippers extend from the hip down to the cuff, simplifying entry and exit, and together with the full-length front zipper, make slipping into the suit as easy as falling on ice.

The suit wears as well as its features might imply, too, without being overly bulky or constraining. Even in bitter cold weather, the layered construction keeps you as warm as a bum over a subway grate. Yet should the temperature rise, the cold-weather suit can keep you from getting all steamed up; simply unzip the front slightly for ventilation. Moreover, the double layers of water-resistant coating make the suit nearly waterproof, although hard rain or wet snow might dampen you, because of minor seepage through the seat stitching.

In dry weather, though, the only feature that *might* prove frustrating to longer-legged riders are the too-short stirrups; they have a tendency to pull tight, particularly when you're riding a cruiser. Otherwise, each part of the Spartan suit does its job well. Together, they offer protection from March's chilly, wet weather when a young man's fancy turns to riding. —*Tim Brodd*

Distributors: Rocky Cycle Inc., 1250 Elko Drive, Sunnyvale, California 94089; and Ed Tucker Distributing, 1775 Hurd Drive, Irving, Texas 75062
Suggested retail price: $99.95
Available color: black with reflective striping
Sizes: S–XL



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Lazer's aerodynamic LZ2 is the result of four years extensive R&D—and it's quickly becoming the standard by which other helmets are judged. Special LZ2 features include • Ronfalin® TX-60 construction, a hi-tech solvent-resistant material which meets or exceeds domestic and international safety standards • New open/close ventilation system for better cooling and defogging • Unique front spoiler reduces drag, lessening rider fatigue • Anatomical design for increased safety • Luxurious four-piece velour interior assembly for added comfort • Thick injection-molded, recessed face shield for quieter riding • Quick release buckle for use with gloves • Five-position, self-locking ratcheted face shield features one-finger operation • Available in red, black, white, metallic silver, metallic red, and metallic charcoal grey. If you want a helmet that'll take to the streets like a true "road warrior," let Lazer's LZ2 show you the way—it's a brilliant buy!

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ROAD TEST:

Yamaha FZ750

Prevailing winner.

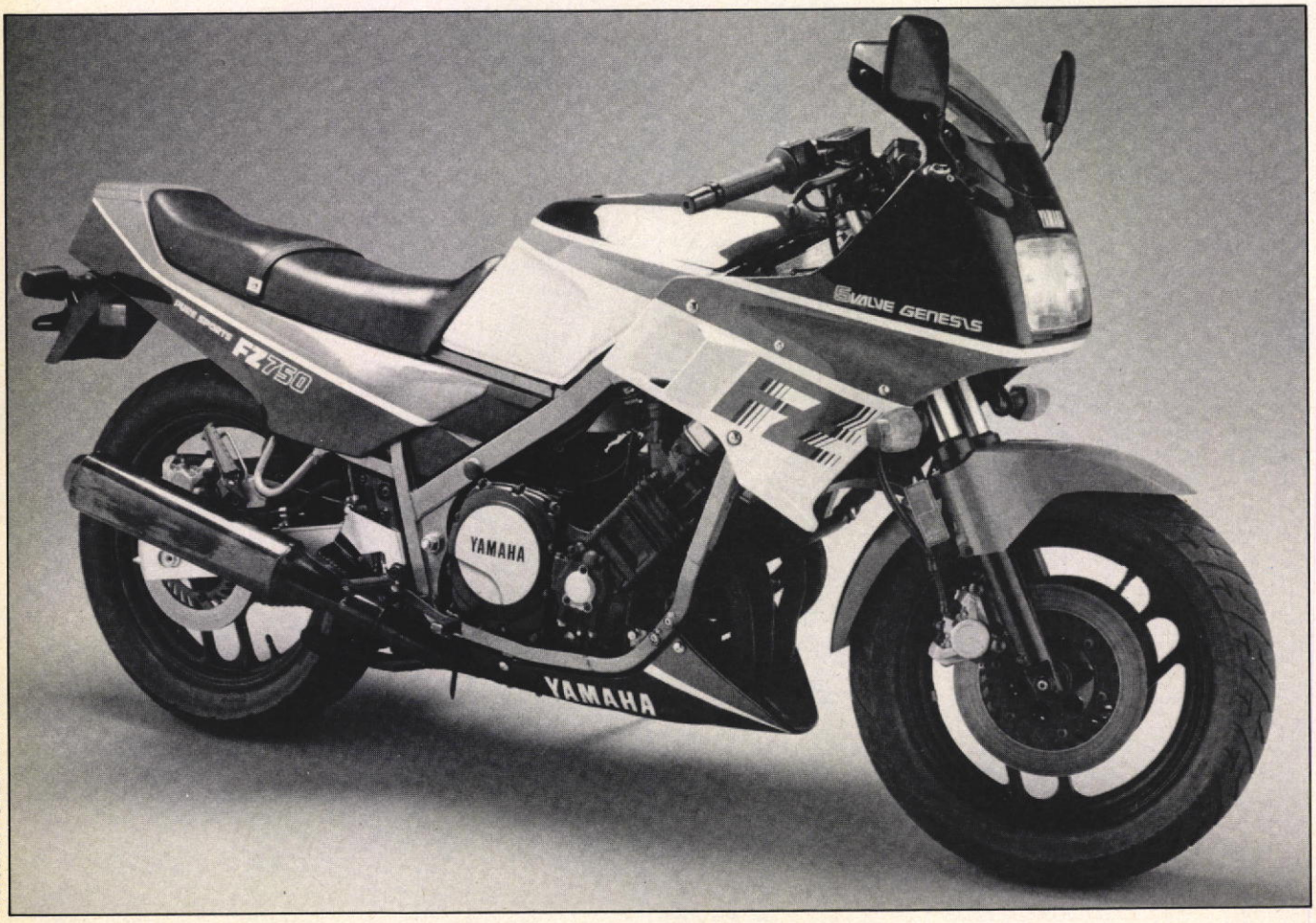
• Yamaha's FZ750 took the American sporting crowd by storm last year with its stunning combination of gale-force horsepower and racer-replica handling. Those attributes, together with the bike's overall balance, helped turn it into a whirlwind success on American backroads and racetracks alike. But the FZ now has some high-pressure competition in the form of Suzuki's now-Americanized GSX-R750 and Honda's all-new VFR750 Interceptor. Yet despite this flurry of new hardware, aimed squarely at the FZ, Yamaha is confidently predicting that the 750 can weather the storm, and so has performed only minor alterations to its sporting flagship. One of those changes is significant, though: For the first time, the FZ gets a California visa, thanks to an evaporative-emissions system fitted all Golden State-bound FZs.

Otherwise, all FZs—California and 49-state alike—remain essentially in last year's trim, although the 749.6cc, five-valve-per-cylinder powerplant now has a thrust bearing between the clutch's pushrod and pressure plate to help smooth clutch actuation. The cosmetic front is marked by several changes, including a switch to dual headlights from the '85's single lamp, a chin spoiler and an aircraft-style fuel filler. The net effect of those changes is fairly minor, although the California model's 494-pound weight betrays its 9 additional pounds of emissions controls and cosmetic additions.

But even California's emissions sniffers can't take the edge off the FZ's stellar engine performance. Even hampered by less-than-perfect dragstrip conditions, our California model ripped through the quarter-mile in 11.383 seconds, a heartbeat shy of the '85's best of 11.317 seconds. You're not likely to notice that difference on the road, though, because the FZ reels out a stunning stream of acceleration, one that starts getting serious as low as 3000 rpm and continues well past the motor's 11,000-rpm redline. What's more, there's enough punch available above 6000 rpm to rocket the FZ from turn to turn as though it's being rear-ended by a Toronado. In short, the FZ possesses a powerband as broad as a wrestler's back, along with a top-end rush that would do justice to a literbike.

According to Yamaha, you can credit the FZ's unusual five-valve-per-cylinder arrangement for both the engine's level and breadth of horsepower. This combustion-chamber setup offers several advantages over a more conventional four-valve-per-cylinder design, one of which is that the greater valve area aids cylinder filling at all engine speeds. In addition, Yamaha claims that the small, lightweight valves are all but impossible to float. Yamaha's innovation didn't stop with the combustion-chamber design, however; the engine's 45 degree inclination brings with it advantages over the vertical inline configuration that complement the benefits of the five-valve combustion chamber. The motor's angle places the quartet of downdraft Mikuni carburetors so that they aim the fuel charge directly into the combustion chamber, further aiding intake flow—and horsepower. Similarly, the exhaust system benefits from the inclined cylinder bank, because the design allows the stainless-steel header pipes to have fewer severe bends than would be the case on a conventional inline four.

Compared to the FZ's unusual engine configuration, the bike's chassis design seems almost mundane. Except for the



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FZ750 homes in on an apex with radar-like accuracy

In fast corners, stable handling and sticky tires make it feel right as rain.

YAMAHA FZ750

Importer: Yamaha Motor Corp.
6555 Katella Ave.
Cypress, California 90630

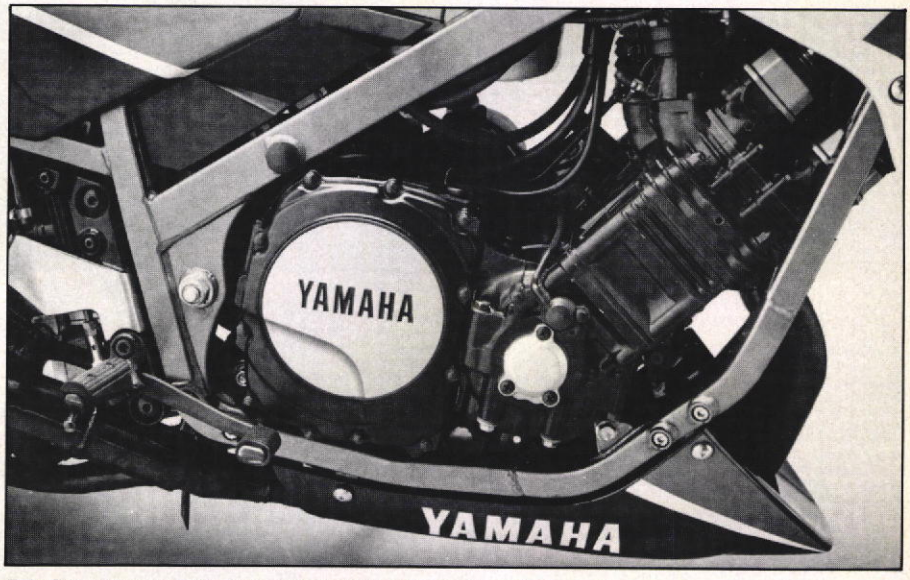
Category	street
Suggested retail price	$4599
Engine type	liquid-cooled four-stroke transverse 45-degree-inclined four
Valve arrangement	double overhead camshafts, five valves per cylinder
Bore and stroke	68.0mm x 51.6mm
Displacement	749.6cc
Compression ratio	11.2:1
Carburetion	four 34mm Mikuni constant-vacuum
Gearbox	6-speed
Front fork/wheel travel	Kayaba air-spring, 39mm stanchion tube diameter/5.0 in. (128mm)
Rear shock/wheel travel	single Yamaha, 17-position adjustable rebound damping, 12mm spring preload range/4.7 in. (120mm)
Weight	494 lbs. (224.1kg)
Wheelbase	58.0 to 59.2 in. (1473 to 1503mm)
Seat height	31.1 in. (791mm)
Steering head angle	25.5 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail	3.70 in. (94mm)
Best ¼-mile acceleration	11.383 sec., 118.26 mph (190 kph)
Top speed (observed)	145 mph (233 kph)
Stopping distance from 60 mph	127 ft. (38.7m)
Fuel consumption	37 to 45 mpg (16 to 19 km/l)
Warranty	12 months, unlimited mileage
Available color	Stormy White/Blue only

frame's uncommonly steep 25.5 degree steering head angle, the chassis adheres to modern sportbike convention with its single-shock rear suspension, box-section mild-steel frame and 16-inch front wheel. Likewise, the FZ's suspension also follows current sportbike fashion. Up front, there's an air-adjustable Kayaba fork that features a variable compression-damping circuit that alters damping rates according to slider speed and position. At the rear, the FZ uses a single Yamaha-built shock, with adjustments for both spring preload and rebound damping.

Those suspension components are largely responsible for the FZ's racebike-replica handling, too. With the rear suspension set to No. 3 (of five) spring preload and No. 4 (of five) damping, and the fork pumped to 5 psi (0–5.7 psi range), the ride is firm and communicative of what the tires are doing. And although Yamaha claims to have made no changes to either end of the bike's suspension, our '86 model responded to small bumps somewhat better than the '85 FZ did. Likewise, the 750's ventilated front disc brake feels slightly stronger than the '85 model's—though, again, Yamaha says the pieces are the same. What hasn't changed, however, is the FZ's taut, stable feel; the bike maintains its composure even through rough, fast sweepers. That's where the FZ is most at home, too: Despite its lightning-quick steering geometry, it takes a concerted effort to get the FZ thrown into a turn, and can make especially tight canyon roads a test of physical strength.

In a similar fashion, riding the FZ on the open highway can become a test of endurance. The bike's racer-crouch riding position is the culprit here: The low, clip-on bars force the rider to carry much of his weight on his wrists and hands, tiring them well before the 5.8-gallon fuel tank runs dry. What's more, there's a significant amount of vibration present between 4000 and 5000 rpm—or 55–70 mph in top gear.

Those are shortcomings Yamaha decided to let alone; the firm offers the FJ1200 for those who place comfort above pure, hard-core sporting ability. Instead, the FZ's outlook is to satisfy the card-carrying knee-draggers, and it does so with a healthy dollop of high-revving horsepower and razor-sharp handling. But now that Honda and Suzuki have unleashed new 750-class sporting hardware, the FZ is in the eye of the hurricane. The fact that the FZ returns virtually unchanged from last year only underlines Yamaha's confidence in the bike's ability to weather the coming storm, and reign supreme in America's sporting climate. *—Marc Cook*



FZ's five-valve-per-cylinder engine is little changed from last year's

And its combination of howling horsepower and tractability remain.

INTRODUCING THE FIRST GUARANTEED TO SIT

There are two very important reasons for owning the 1986 Suzuki Cavalcade LX: you and your co-rider. Because the Cavalcade LX is the first luxury touring machine designed around the two of you, instead of the other way around.

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THE COMFORT OF IT. Orthopedically-designed seats with Suzuki's exclusive new air cushion system—a pneumatically-inflatable co-rider seat and backrest. Wind tunnel-designed windshield/fairing combo shields riders from rain and minimizes noise. AM/FM cassette deck with separate rider/co-rider controls. Adjustable rider footpegs and co-rider footboards to minimize fatigue. Computerized "resume function" cruise control.

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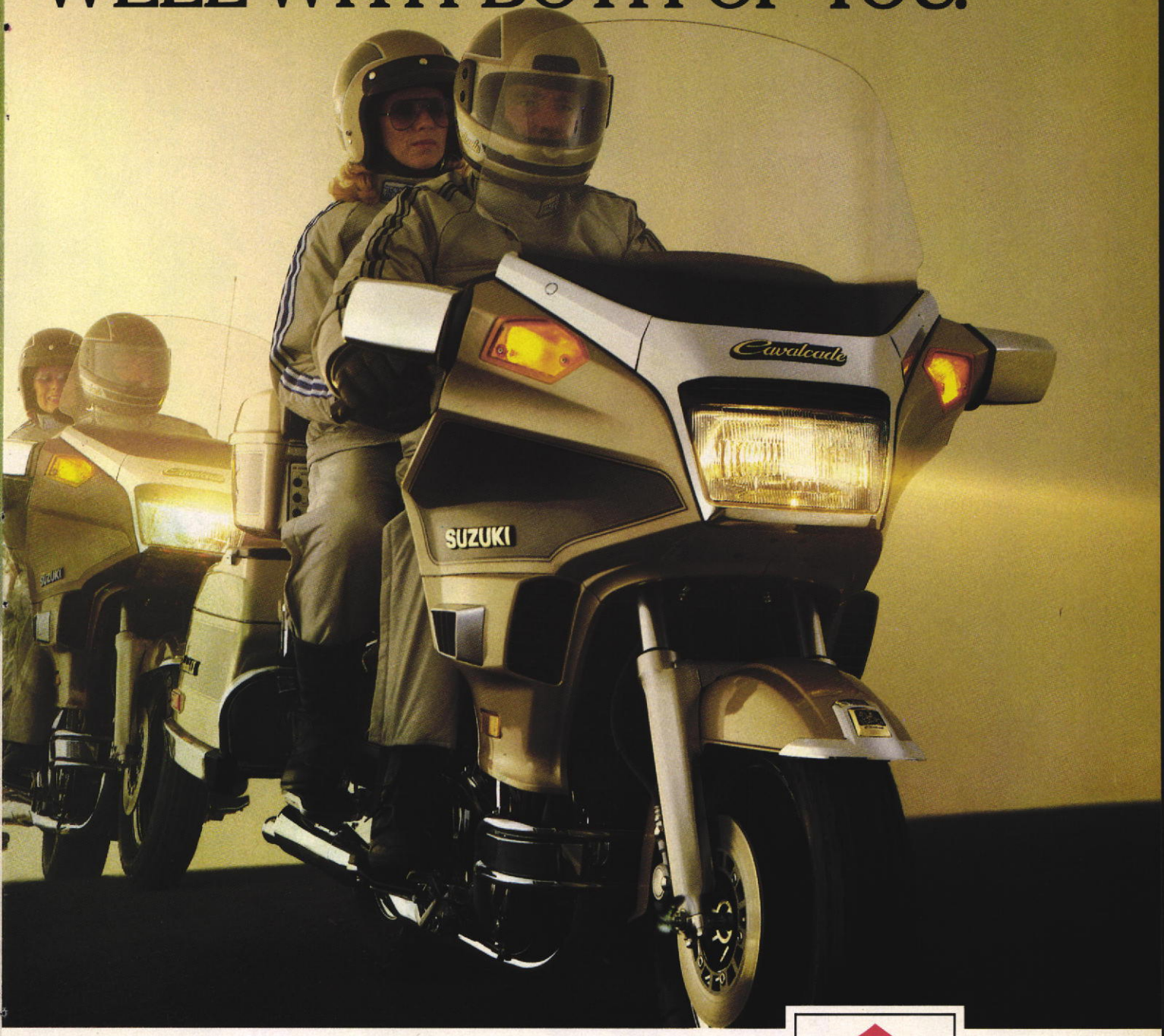

THE MECHANICS OF IT.
The largest engine in its class. A 1360cc, DOHC, liquid-cooled, 16-valve, 82° V-4 with TSCC. Maintenance-free valve adjusters and transistorized ignition. Shaft-drive with built-in damper for lash-free operation. Pneumatic "Auto-Levelling" System. Triple disc brakes.

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It's comforting to know that Suzuki has the Cavalcade Security Service Program, a nationwide specially-trained dealer network, to give Cavalcade owners on-the-road priority service. Suzuki also backs the Cavalcade with a 24-month, 24,000-mile warranty. See the "Limited Warranty" policy at your local dealer for complete details.

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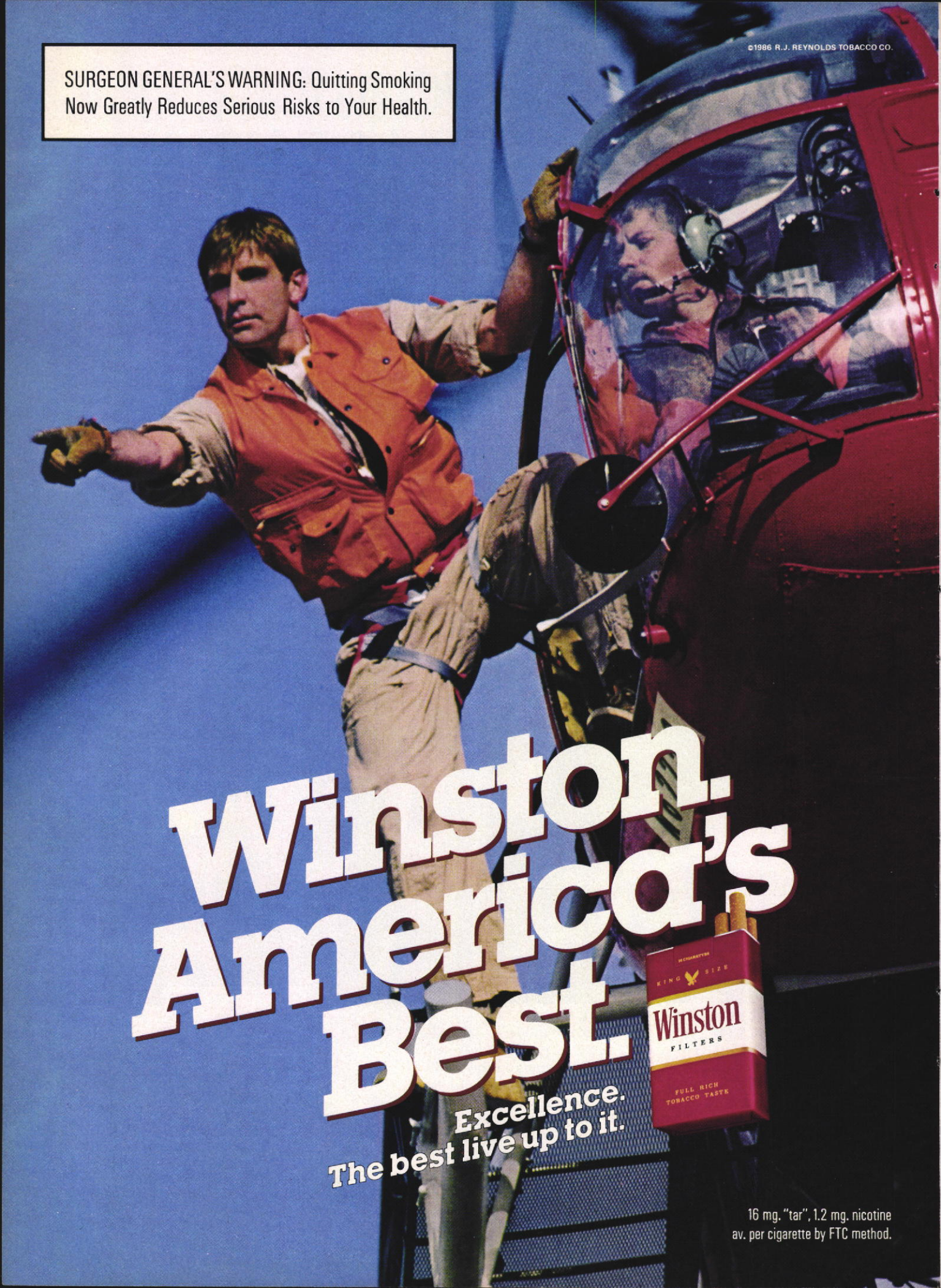
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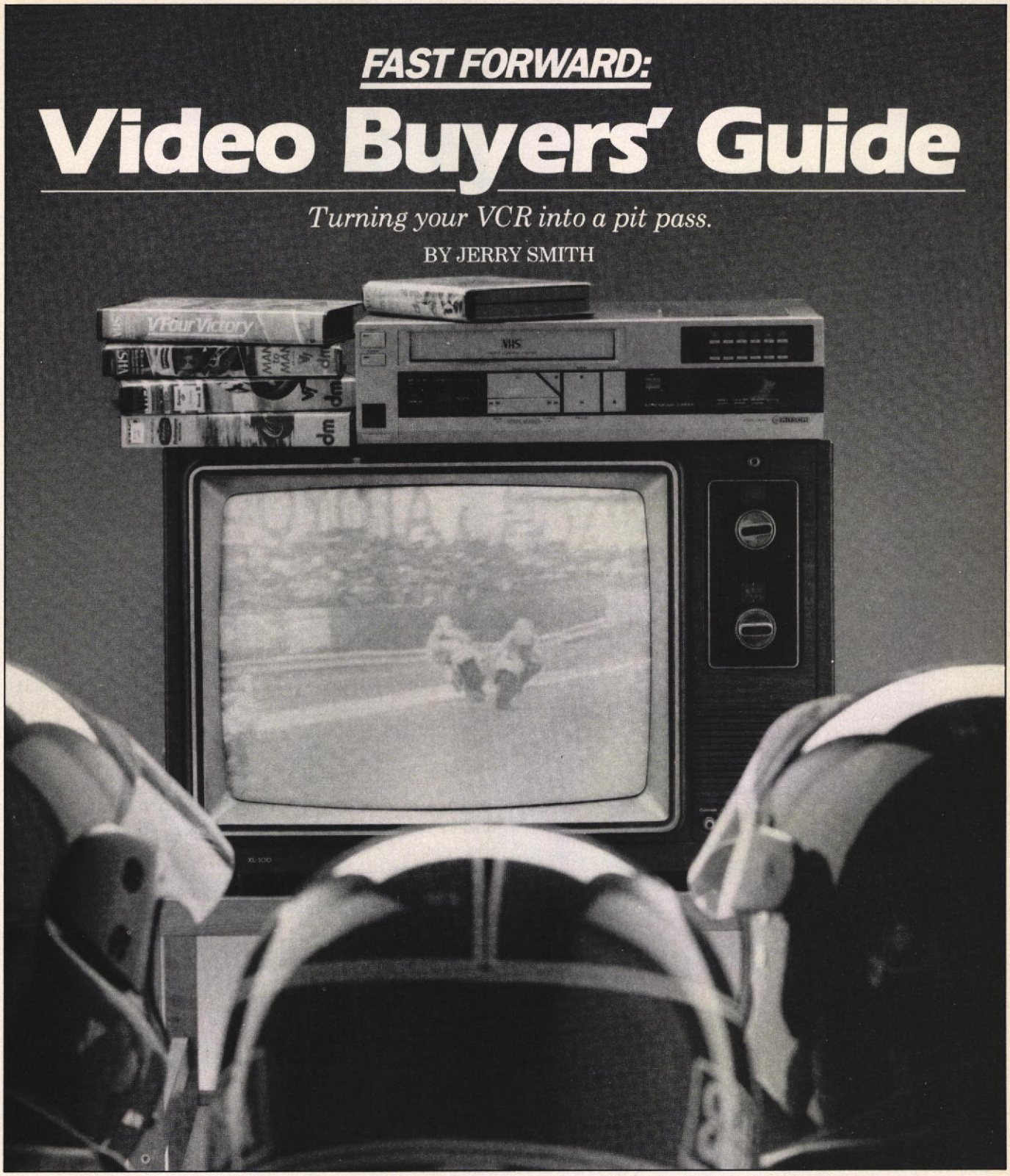
Video Buyers' Guide

Turning your VCR into a pit pass.

BY JERRY SMITH



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No two racetracks in the world are quite the same. From the high-banked corners of Daytona to the tree-lined straights of the Isle of Man, each track has its own identity. Yet despite their differences, there's one thing many of the racetracks of the world have in common.

That something is inaccessability: Some of the best tracks are on the other side of the world, and if you can't get to them, you might miss one of the best races ever held there. And not only are some of the best tracks thousands of miles away, but some of the best races are years in the past, too.

Luckily, a video cassette recorder can transport you all the way around the world—or back in time—in the blink of an eye. A VCR can get you grandstand tickets for just about any race you want to see, and bring you back to your living room an hour or so later. And so you won't have to miss a minute of the action, we've rounded up a sampling of the latest motorcycle videos, featuring both pavement and off-road racing.

So fire up the popcorn popper, dim the lights and sink back into your easy chair for CYCLE GUIDE's video race tour. Just don't forget your helmet.

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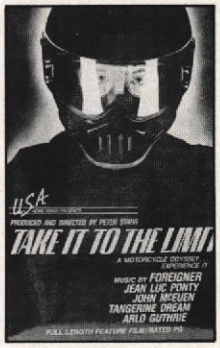
89 minutes
$59.95

• Film fans who spend hours rhapsodizing over the performances of Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman as Rick and Ilsa in "Casablanca," or James Cagney as Cody Jarret in "White Heat," are unlikely to heap the same praise on Malcolm Smith's performance in Bruce Brown's film about motorcycling. Nevertheless, "On Any Sunday" is a classic, the two-wheel equivalent of "Casablanca," and no collection of moto-videos is complete without it. Like any classic movie, OAS, though dated, withstands repeated viewing, and looks as good the hundred-and-first time as it does the first. The other "stars" of OAS are real-life movie star Steve McQueen (also known as Harvey Mushman), flattracker MertLawwill, and thousands of average motorcyclists. Brown's camera follows them all through a two-wheel odyssey that includes roadracing, hillclimb, motocross, desert racing and plain old weekend play riding. OAS is not only the first and most influential motorcycle movie, it's a genuine celebration of motorcycling.



"Take it to the Limit"
Available from:
Commtron
2365 Industrial Parkway W.
Hayward, California 94545
95 minutes
$39.95

• Some see "Limit" as little more than an attempt to cash in on the success of "On Any Sunday," since, like OAS, Starr's video is a sampling of motorcycle sports including roadracing, dragracing, trials, flattrack, hillclimb, enduro and desert racing. But if you can ignore the numerous crowd scenes and plodding, gee-whiz narration, there are plenty of visual gems in "Limit": Kenny Roberts wrestling the TZ750-powered flattracker at the Indy Mile; helmet-camera shots of Mike Hailwood slicing through pea-soup fog at more than 160 mph at the Isle of Man; and Steve Baker besting European roadracing superstars like Phil Read, Giacomo Agostini and Barry Sheene at Mallory Park. The finale—an animated short with Arlo Guthrie as a motorcycle-riding pickle, is either silly or hilarious, depending on how you felt about the '60s. As a final note, this video version of "Take It to the Limit" predates, and is different from, Peter Starr's theatrical movie by the same name, released a few years ago in cooperation with Kawasaki.

"American Challenge"
Available from:
Halmar Video
P.O. Box 793
Niagara Falls, Ontario
L2E 6V6 Canada
65 minutes
$44.95 (U.S.)

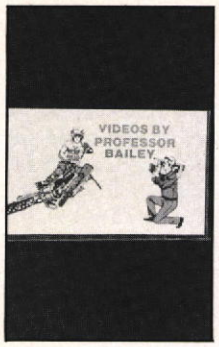
• When you think of American roadracers competing abroad, the name Kenny Roberts usually comes to mind first. Although three-time World Champion Roberts is generally thought to be the first American to take European roadracing by storm, in 1977 Steve Baker of Bellingham, Washington, went to Europe to contest the 500cc World Championship and the Formula 750 Championship. "American Challenge" highlights Baker's 500cc campaign in Italy, Belgium and England, and a Formula 750 round in Holland. The racing is average, but techno-freaks should look closely at the bikes, which were state-of-the-art at the time, and compare them to today's front-line GP machinery. The second half of this video includes highlights of another American, Freddie Spencer, competing at the Belgian round of the 1982 500cc World Championship, including scenes of the sidecar and 250cc races. Unfortunately, a Spencer runaway in the 500cc GP makes for little more than average racing.

"Eleven Tenths"
Available from:
Lockhart
15717 Texaco St.
Paramount, California 90723
55 minutes
$39.95

• If you want absolutely the hottest roadracing action available, look no further: "Eleven Tenths," filmed at Spa in Belgium, is the closest thing to a factory ride that you'll find on video tape. Actually only one of a series of films covering the 1985 Grand Prix season, it begins with the 250cc race, the most fiercely contested class in GP roadracing. Plenty of different camera angles catch the bikes at speed, drifting—and sometimes cartwheeling—through corners. After the checkered flag of the 250 race, sit back and catch your breath during the sidecar race, because the best action in this, or any other, video comes last—riding the 500cc race with Randy Mamola on his vee-three Honda, courtesy of a camera mounted behind the windscreen. Wear your helmet and leathers for the finale of *this* segment. And contact Lockhart for information about subscribing to videotapes of the 1986 World Championship races, with each event of the series expected to be available on tape about two weeks after the race.

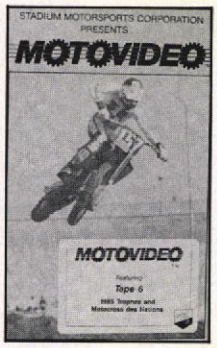
"Superstar Showdown"
Available from:
Halmar Video
P.O. Box 793
Niagara Falls, Ontario
L2E 6V6 Canada
82 minutes
$44.95 (U.S.)

• When the Transatlantic Challenge was first held in 1971, it was little more than a benefit for British riders and a showcase for their sophisticated roadracing machinery. But in the '70s, as American racers gradually became better on pavement and acquired top-line machinery to match their talents, each successive year's T/A Challenge saw the tables turning more and more toward the American team, until British superiority became a thing of the past. "Superstar Showdown" chronicles the 1984 Transatlantic Challenge with Americans Spencer, Roberts, Lawson, Mamola, Cooley, Baldwin and Aldana squaring off againt the British team of Sheene, Haslam, Gardner, McElnea, Crosby and Marshall. The six-race series is presented in a video with the highest production standards imaginable. This is what motorcycle racing would look like if network TV treated it like pro football, with a variety of camera angles, intelligent narration and non-stop action racing footage.



"1985 Supercross Highlights"
Available from:
Videos by Professor Bailey
P.O. Box Box 130
Axton, Virginia 24054
59 minutes
$49.95

• If you're one of those people who skips the appetizer and gets right to the main course; if you warm up for a day's ride with a twenty-minute moto; if you want nothing but non-stop action without the boring preliminaries, hold on—this video drags you straight into the heat of the racing like a V-Max with a stuck throttle. "1985 Supercross Highlights" shows the best action from the main event of each of last year's Supercross races, including San Diego, Anaheim, Seattle, Atlanta, Daytona, Houston, Orlando, Dallas, Los Angeles and Pasadena. This video is weak on narration, relying mainly on the trackside PA system for commentary, so unless you already know the players without a scorecard, it's tough to follow the leaders. But you don't have to know who's who in order to enjoy the tight, elbow-to-elbow spectacle of indoor stadium racing. By the time you've seen "1985 Supercross Highlights," you'll know why Supercross has become the most popular form of motorcycle racing in the country.



"1985 Motocross des Nations"
Available from:
Motovideo
P.O. Box 501
South Laguna, California 92677
60 minutes
$49.95

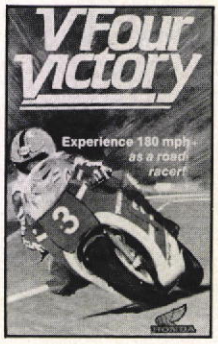
• It must have sounded like a pretty good idea at first: Take the best motocross riders from 21 countries in the 125cc, 250cc and 500cc classes, divide them into teams and run them all at once on the same track. Under most circumstances, a format like this would almost be guaranteed to provide plenty of passing and lots of inter-class racing. But given the relatively smooth and very fast track at Gaildorf, Germany, site of the 1985 Motocross des Nations, it just didn't turn out that way. The makers of this video didn't help matters, either. A bare minimum of camera angles gives the viewer essentially the same perspective as a spectator at the race who stays in one turn all day. Even the announcer can't get very excited about the racing, and this lack of enthusiasm on the part of all concerned infects the viewer, who soon wanders off in search of flats to fix. If nothing else, this video shows why indoor stadium racing is on the rise while its outdoor counterpart is on the wane.

"Man to Man"
Available from:
Lockhart
15717 Texaco St.
Paramount,
California 90723
60 minutes
$39.95

• Once a year, a sleepy little island in the middle of the Irish Sea plays host to the most famous—and most controversial—motorcycle race in the world. Racing enthusiasts throughout the world feel either one way or the other about the annual Isle of Man TT races. To some, the IOM is the last of the true roadraces, and the highest form of motorcycle competition to which a rider can aspire. But others see the TT as a deadly throwback, too fast and dangerous for today's racing motorcycles. No matter which side of the fence you're on in the IOM controversy, after seeing "Man to Man" you'll understand the attraction the TT has for enthusiasts world-wide. "Man to Man" not only depicts this fast-disappearing form of high-speed racing, but captures the flavor, history and tradition of the IOM, as well. Although you might want to shoo the mini-bikers out of the room for the wet T-shirt contest in the middle of the video, as a primer on the TT "Man to Man" is hard to beat.

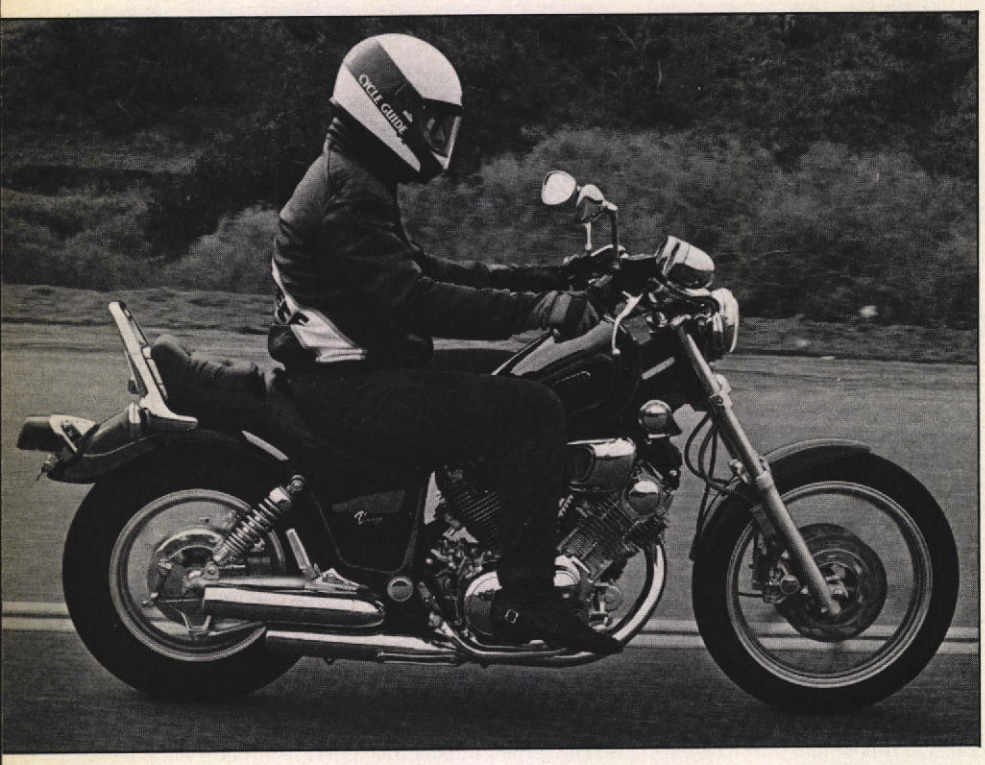
"The Best of Motorcycle World"
Available from:
Larry Huffman Enterprises
P.O. Box 3279
San Clemente,
California 92672
38 minutes
$29.95

• In addition to being the man behind the voice at Supercross and speedway events, Larry "Supermouth" Huffman can also be seen each week on his TV show, "Motorcycle World." Huffman's show covers all facets of motorcycling, and "The Best of Motorcycle World" is a compilation of segments from the show. Huffman leads off with highlights of Japan's first Supercross stadium motocross, held in Tokyo in 1982. The tape follows up with another Supercross event closer to home, at the Pontiac Silverdome, featuring a rousing dice between Bob Hannah and Broc Glover. Next, Supermouth shines his spotlight on trials riding and vintage motorcycles. Finally, the emphasis shifts back to high performance, first with coverage of Suzuki's quarter-mile record attempt at Baylands Raceway with a GSX-R1100, and finally stopping off at Willow Springs Raceway for the crash-ridden 1983 AMA Superbike race, where Honda and Kawasaki took their title fight down to the wire.



"V Four Victory"
Available from:
Motor Cycle Video
P.O. Box 0550
Lakeland, Florida
33802
60 minutes
$49.95

• For many European racing enthusiasts, "roadracing" means just that—racing on closed-off public roads, where track safety amounts to putting haybales in front of the brick buildings that line the circuit. Nevertheless, speeds are as high at these tracks as those reached on closed Grand Prix circuits, and it takes a special kind of rider to compete in races such as these. "V Four Victory" follows Honda rider Joey Dunlop to two of the world's premier road circuit events, the Isle of Man and the Ulster GP. The racing footage in the first half of the video is only average, but the second half is worth the wait. Here Dunlop, with a camera mounted behind the windscreen of his Honda, takes you along on a complete lap of the IOM circuit at speed through narrow streets, along tree-lined lanes and over the winding mountain portion of the course. It's a thrilling—and sometimes frightening—look at what "real" roadracing is all about and why so few racers are as good at it as Dunlop. •



ROAD TEST:

Yamaha 700 Virago

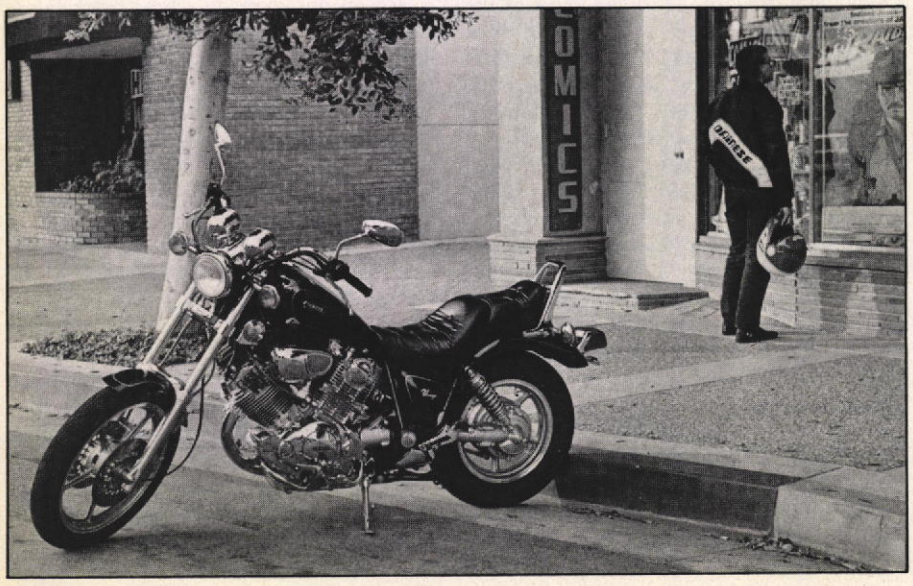
Back to basics in the cruiser class.

• When it comes to the Japanese vee-twin cruiser class, Yamaha practically taught the course. That's because its 750 Virago, enrolled in 1981, was Japan's first tandem vee-twin boulevard bomber and, thanks to the bike's popularity, set the course each Japanese manufacturer eventually would take. But all of the Virago's vee-twin classmates deviated from the lesson plan in some way, many with a healthy dollop of techno-trickery. Some of the contenders came to the class with offset crankpins, liquid-cooling, counterbalancers and either three or four valves in each cylinder—a sharp contrast to the Yamaha's relatively simple two-valve-per-cylinder, air-cooled powerplant.

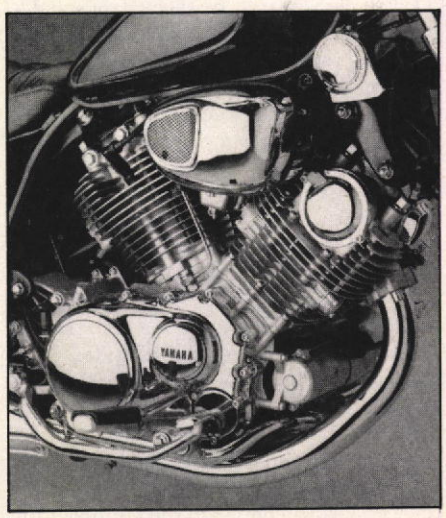
Yamaha feels certain the Viragos can make the grade without such high-tech accoutrements. That's especially true in light of the chassis' post-graduate studies, completed in the '84 model year. That refresher course included an all-new twin-shock rear suspension to replace the original Monoshock setup, and a steering head angle increased from 29.5 to 32.0 degrees. Also, both the fork and shocks were stripped of damping and air-pressure adjusters, leaving only rear-spring preload, and then fitted with softer springs and lighter damping rates than on previous Viragos. Overall, the thrust of the '84 chassis changes was to simplify the bike's hardware, and give it a more conventional cruiser look. Changes for '86 continue that theme, with cosmetic alterations such as more rounded engine cases and a different fender treatment; functionally, the only change this year is a 0.6-gallon increase in fuel capacity.

On the other hand, the Virago's 75 degree vee-twin powerplant has received remarkably few major changes through its production run. Aside from a 2.8mm smaller bore—instituted in '84 to bring the bike's displacement below the 700cc cutoff for the ITC tariff—the '86 edition remains faithful to the original design. And like its predecessors, the Virago's engine pounds out a broad spread of power, which makes around-town cruising as easy as an open-book test. The engine makes usable power from barely above idle, though it accelerates best when spinning above 3000 rpm. And while the Virago won't embarrass most 700s in horsepower output, its torquey, no-surprises style of power delivery and short gearing score it straight-As in horsepower management. What's more, the Virago's motor produces that power with remarkably little vibration: Despite the motor's solid mounts and lack of counterbalancer, only a slight throb seeps through the bar and pegs.

The Virago's streetwise power delivery combines with its laid-back chassis to make in-town riding as much fun as a field trip, too. Despite its ultra-conservative steering geometry, the Virago possesses delightfully light steering feel. You can thank the bike's wide buckhorn handlebar for much of

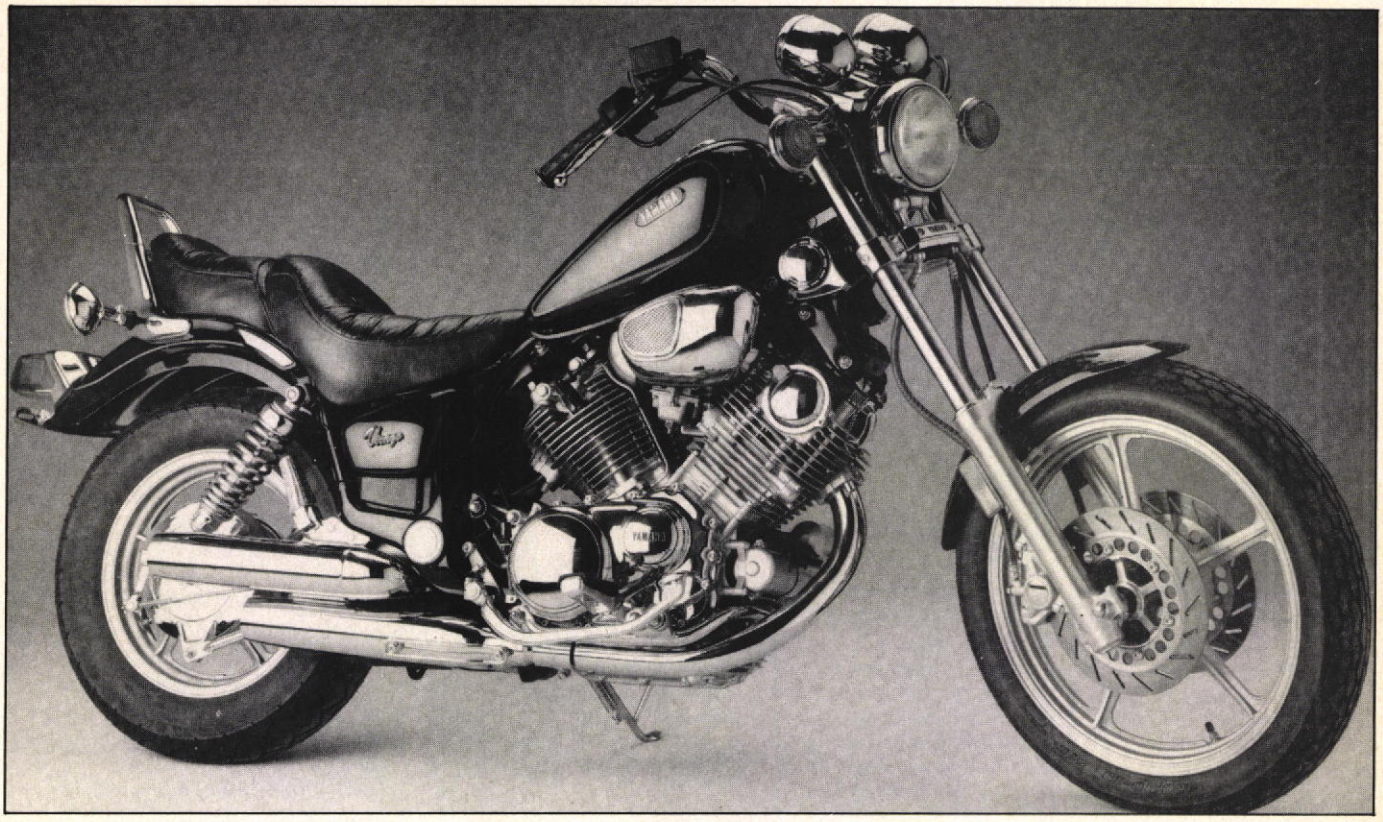


PHOTOGRAPHY © 1986 ANDREA KING



Vee-twin displays generous brightwork

Outshined only by its power delivery.



PHOTOGRAPHY © 1986 VIC HUBER

Virago's low-slung chassis, raked-out front fork and staggered-dual pipes are textbook '80's cruiservee

But its air-cooled, two-valve-per-cylinder engine subscribes to a simpler school of design.

that delicate feel, but it's unlikely you will appreciate the way the handlebar affects the bike's comfort quotient. The bar conspires with the Yamaha's low saddle and feet-forward footpeg location to make the bike feel cramped, even for compact riders. Moreover, the Virago's cruiser-standard riding position places most of the rider's weight on his butt, and the saddle sees to it that he's not particularly pampered, either.

Fortunately, the Virago's compliant suspension takes some of the sting out of the bike's tight seating accommodations. Thanks largely to spring rates that are as soft as a dormitory pillow, the Yamaha practically glides over most pavement irregularities—although with a 185-pound rider aboard, pothole-sized bumps can bottom both ends. Turning up the preload on the shocks helps somewhat, but overall the suspension works best with the shocks set to their No. 2 preload position. There, the bike's ride remains firm enough to cope with large bumps without sacrificing compliance over smaller irregularities.

Still, that doesn't make highway duty part of the Virago's curriculum. Its sit-up riding position and cramped quarters tire the rider quickly, and the bike's firm saddle begins to feel more like the principal's bench after an hour on the road. To its credit, the Virago's plush suspension irons out most highway irregularities, and there's hardly a trace of engine vibration present at 60 mph. Moreover, the vee-twin is stingy with fuel, averaging nearly 40 mpg—which translates into a generous 140 mile range from the 3.8-gallon tank.

The Yamaha scores much better marks during extracurricular backroad work. True, the fork's soft springing lets it slam to its stops if you use the powerful front disc brake to its fullest, but otherwise the 700 performs canyon road maneuvers with surprising competence for a cruiservee. You can lean the bike until the footpegs begin to fold and the rear brake lever grazes the asphalt, yet the Virago will hold its line the way a sophomore clutches "Cliffs Notes."

While that behavior is commendable, backroad gymnastics wasn't part of the Virago's schooling. Instead, the XV majored in Urban Dynamics, and shows that it learned its lessons well by displaying the requisite torquey, staccato vee-twin rumblings and textbook city-smart handling. At the same time, it eschews the kind of techno-trickery that's permeated the cruiservee class since the original Virago's introduction, and it's the bike's style of mechanical honesty that Yamaha wanted to come to the surface. And what the Virago manages to do without offset crankpins and multi-valve heads, to no real-world detriment, helps to underscore the strength of that philosophy. Then again, when you're talking about the cruiservee class, it always helps to know the instructor. —*Marc Cook*

Wire-wheel Virago variant

Same college, $100 lower tuition.

YAMAHA 700 VIRAGO

Importer: Yamaha Motor Corp.
6555 Katella Ave.
Cypress, California 90630

Category	street
Suggested retail price	$3199
Engine type	four-stroke 75 degree tandem vee-twin
Valve arrangement	single overhead camshafts, two valves per cylinder
Bore and stroke	80.2mm x 69.2mm
Displacement	699.2cc
Compression ratio	9.0:1
Carburetion	two 40mm Hitachi constant-vacuum
Gearbox	5-speed
Front fork/wheel travel	Kayaba, 38mm stanchion tube diameter/ 5.7 in. (145mm)
Rear shocks/wheel travel	dual Kayaba, 5-position adjustable spring preload/3.5 in. (90mm)
Weight	489 lbs. (221.8kg)
Wheelbase	59.9 in. (1522mm)
Seat height	28.2 in. (716mm)
Steering head angle	32.0 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail	5.08 in. (129mm)
Best ¼-mile acceleration	13.686 sec., 96.46 mph (155 kph)
Top speed (calculated)	104 mph (167 kph)
Stopping distance from 60 mph	130 ft. (39.6m)
Fuel consumption	39 to 48 mpg (16 to 20 km/l)
Warranty	12 months, unlimited mileage
Available colors	Deep Violet/Orion Silver, Miyabi Maroon/New Ruby Red

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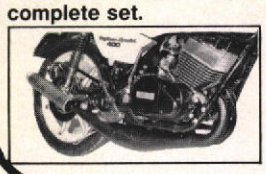

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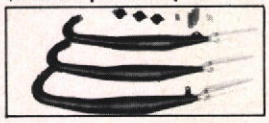

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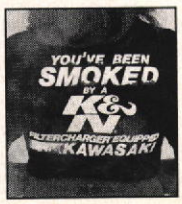
The Stage I kit is precision engineered and easily installed. We've done all the work. After easy installation, you'll know what we mean by performance – strong power, smooth acceleration, crisp throttle response and tire-burning torque. We think it's the best horsepower-per-dollar improvement you can make. Buy our kit now and we'll throw in a free "You've been smoked" K&N T-shirt. Do it now, performance awaits!

K&N products are available by direct mail. Stage I Intake Performance Kit shown is p/n 23-9054. Send $117.08 plus $5.00 shipping and handling to K&N Engineering Inc., P.O. Box 1329, Riverside CA 92502. Legal in CA **only** for racing vehicles which may **never** be used on a highway.



PRODUCT EVALUATION:

Spidi Speed Kenny Gloves

Roadrace gloves fit for a king.

• You've got to hand it to Kenny Roberts: When it comes to roadrace gloves, he knows what suits him best. And Roberts prefers the Spidi roadrace gloves named in his honor: Speed Kenny.

As you'd expect from a glove bearing Kenny Roberts' name, the Speed Kenny was tailored primarily for sportbike and roadrace applications. The result is a snug fit, with no bunching up in the palm or at the fingertips. And, by using *external* stitching construction, there's the sheerist layer of material between your hand and the grip, giving a positive feel for the bike's controls—which is exactly what Roberts insisted on when he helped develop the Speed Kenny.

But that was criteria that Roberts asked for. Spidi delivered more. For instance, rather than using cowhide, the Speed Kenny is tailored from goatskin, which, according to Spidi, has a higher resistance to tearing than cowhide. There are also two double-layer palm patches, with 14 brass rivets providing additional skid protection.

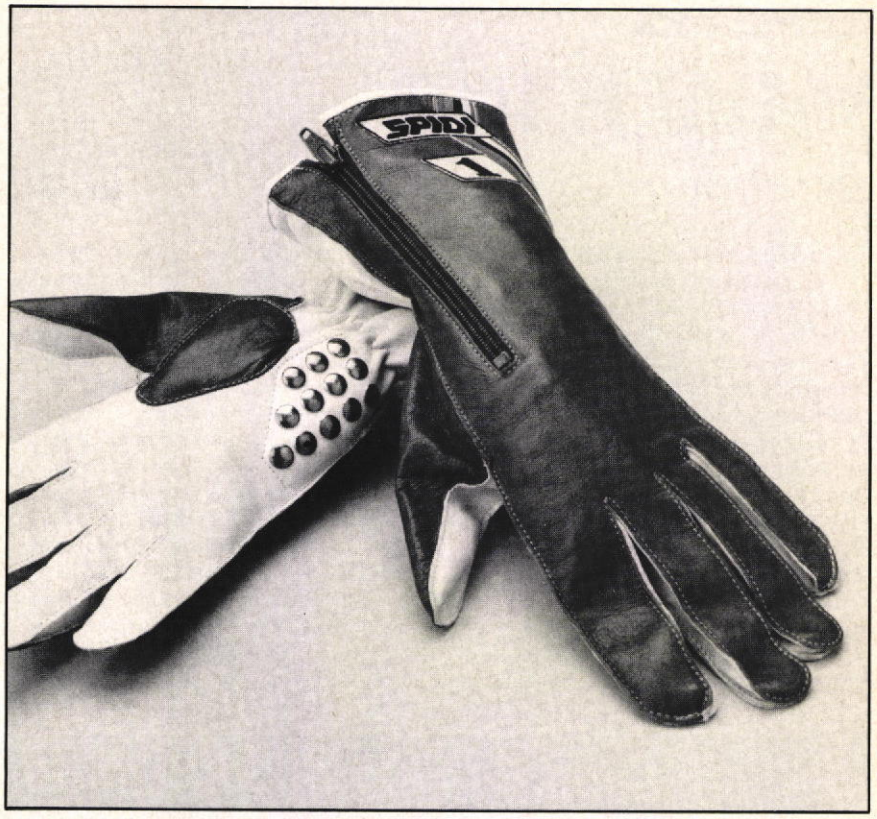
The Speed Kenny fits the sporting look, too. The three-color, vat-dyed goatskin glove uses a nylon YKK zipper on the back of the extended gauntlet so it fits snug over your jacket sleeve. And if you don't particularly care for the externally stitched design, Spidi is introducing an *internally* stitched Speed Kenny and Fast 1 (tailored like the Speed Kenny, but with

different color schemes) this year. Roadracers, however, are sure to prefer the externally stitched Speed Kenny, simply because the design offers more sensitive control feel.

Of course, neither style nor comfort is the major reason for wearing gloves; the point is to protect your hands. And after a low-speed fall while wearing the Speed Kennys, I walked away without a scratch on my hands. Not so, however, for the glove, which absorbed the brunt of the fall. The rivet-reinforced patch over the palm peeled away, but the layer underneath prevented any road-rash, which is exactly the kind of protection a good glove is supposed to provide. But that's what you'd expect from gloves designed to protect one of the best pairs of hands in the business—Kenny Roberts'.

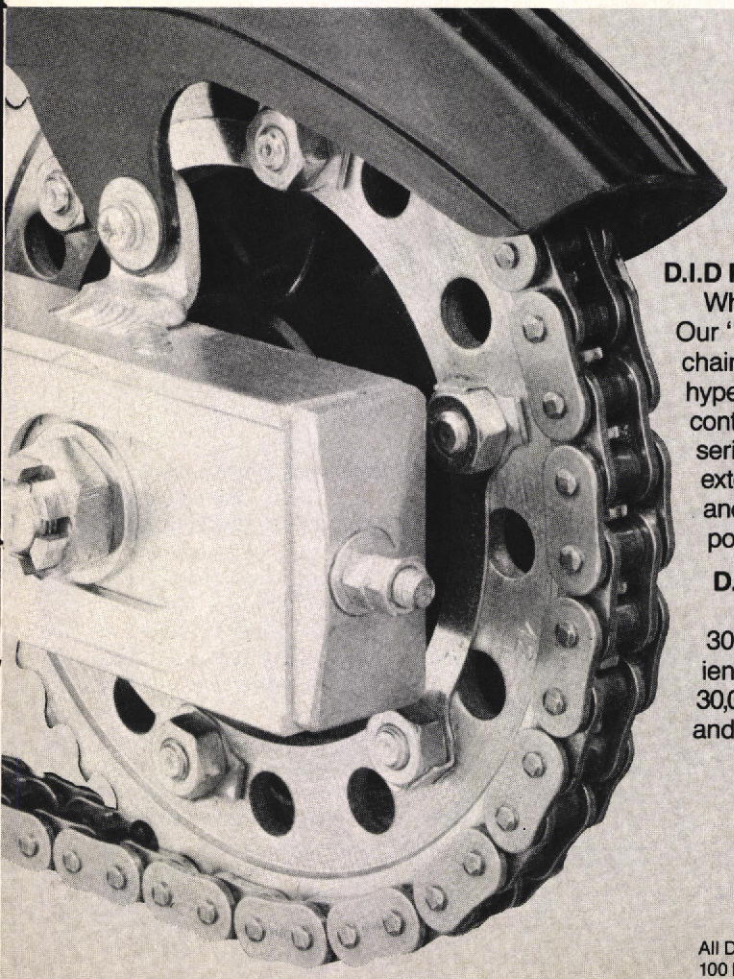
—Dain Gingerelli

Spidi Speed Kenny Gloves
Distributor: Motorace, P.O. Box 861, Wilbraham, Massachusetts 01095
Sizes: XS–XL
Colors: Red/white/black, blue/white/black, blue/white/red, red/white
Suggested retail price: $44.95



Kenny Roberts had a hand in developing the Spidi Speed gloves

So you can come to grips with the competition.



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ROAD TEST:

BMW K100

Burgher king.

• BMW motorcycles traditionally appeal to riders with palates attuned to the more subtle flavors of motorcycling. In the past, those riders often chose BMW's R-series Boxer twin for its unique combination of simplicity and versatility. But tastes change, and after the opposed twin's more than 60 years on the menu, the company figured its regular customers were ready to try something new and different. And in typical BMW fashion, the new K100, with its longitudinal, horizontal inline four-cylinder engine, certainly was *different*—from any previous BMW, or anything from Japan.

That new dish wasn't to everyone's liking at first, though. Vibration assaulted the rider through the footpegs and handlebar, keeping the K100 from reaching the standard of comfort set by the R-series bikes. But BMW engineers have been working on these problems since the bike's introduction to bring the K100 up to the twin's degree of refinement and level of versatility.

One of the main ingredients contributing to the K100's versatility is its 987cc liquid-cooled horizontal-four engine. BMW eschews the multi-valve, peaky-powerband philosophy of literbike engine design in favor of well-rounded overall performance, and the K100's powerplant shows just how satisfying such an engine can be. Its twin-cam cylinder head with two valves per cylinder might seem bland compared to the competition, but the resulting spread of idle-to-redline power, with a torque curve as flat as a Kansas wheatfield, is the meat and potatoes of BMW motorcycles.

The K100's broad powerband doesn't come at the expense of top-end punch, either—twisting open the throttle of the K-bike at 65 mph rewards the rider with a surprising burst of passing power. And thanks in part to its Bosch fuel injection, the flat four effortlessly dishes out its tractable power anywhere in the rev range. The electronic injection system responds crisply to the throttle less than a minute after cold startups, and meters fuel precisely from idle all the way to the engine's 8600-rpm redline, with no hesitation or flat spots.

While the K100's engine can please all but the pickiest moto-gourmets, its suspension is mere white bread by comparison. Around town or on the freeway the K-bike's uninspired suspension works well enough: The front fork, while lacking external adjustment of any kind, soaks up most bumps competently, although the same soft springs that provide a compliant ride under most circumstances allow the front end to dive alarmingly during braking. The rear shock's stiff spring, though, even at its softest preload setting, is below par in its response to pavement irregularities and freeway expansion joints, giving a firm and sometimes jarring ride. In addition, the shock itself lacks sufficient rebound damping to control the bike's considerable shaft jacking.

What's more, the shock's weak rebound damping spoils the K100's appetite for backroads, letting the rear end pogo severely through rough corners, and doing little to combat the jacking caused by mid-corner throttle changes. Those shortcomings are particularly frustrating, because with the suspension ingredients seasoned with a dash of adjustability, the K100's broad power spread and low-effort steering would enable the Beemer to eat up twisty roads. Instead, the inline flat-four's instant power delivery and the chassis' generous cornering clearance often encourage the rider to bite off more than the mismatched suspension can chew.

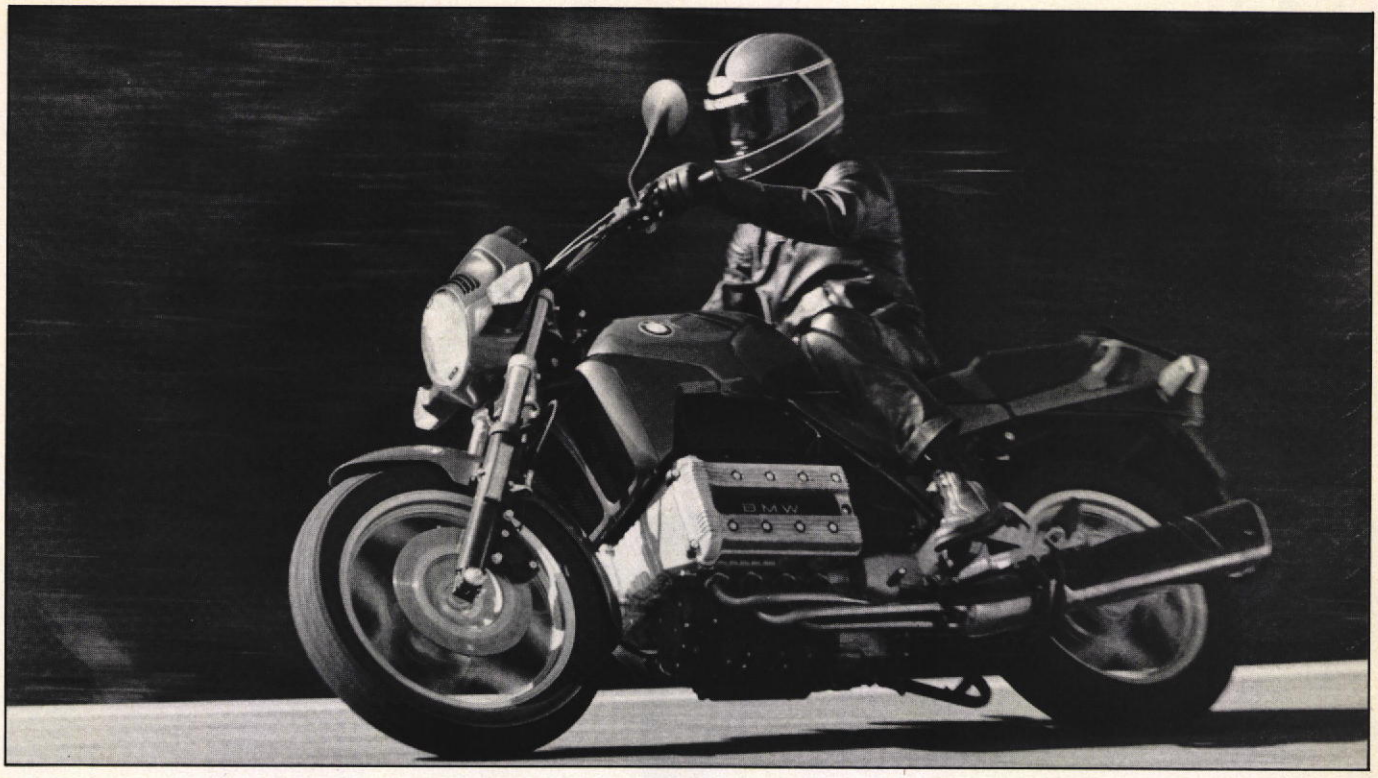
Fortunately, the K-bike's Brembo brakes are better matched than its suspension. In everyday use, the dual front discs and single rear disc are beyond reproach, offering excellent feel and predictable, linear braking power. Once the front brake heats up, however, that linear feel disappears, and beyond a certain point, no matter how much harder you squeeze the lever, there's no additional braking power, and feedback all but vanishes.

Though the suspension and brakes might defeat the K100's backroad aspirations, the Interstate is more its cup of tea, and it's there that the BMW shines. The K-bike's accommodations are Spartan compared to touring bikes in the Japanese idiom—the only evidence of digital instrumentation is a 24-hour clock and an LCD gear-position indicator. Not only that, but riders accustomed to plying the superslab on ultra-plush touring rigs might look askance at

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1986 DAVID DEWHURST

The K100's suspension doesn't relish hot-dogging through the canyons

Instead, this Beemer is bred to loaf along, gobbling up the miles.



the Beemer's firm seat, too, which hardly seems like an inviting place to while away a few hundred miles.

But as unyielding as the seat feels initially, even after hours on the road it's no more uncomfortable than it was in the first 20 minutes of the ride. And not only is it more of a creampuff than it seems at first glance, it's more spacious, too, with plenty of room to move around even for larger riders. Shorter riders will appreciate the new seat's height of 32 inches, 1 inch lower than last year's. As a result, the rear step of the rider's portion of the seat, unlike that of earlier K100 saddles, provides lower back support. And that's good, because the swept-back handlebar, which is positioned perfectly for low-speed riding and short trips, nevertheless places the rider too upright to fight the wind for long without fatigue.

Riders acquainted with earlier K100s will appreciate another comfort-related feature of the latest model with regards to vibration control. Numerous small refinements around the bike, notably new footpeg mounting brackets, virtually eliminate annoying buzziness from the engine getting through to the rider's feet, and new closed-cell foam grips isolate his hands from unruly vibrations.

These small but significant improvements, plus the solid basics that make up the bike, should dispel BMW enthusiasts' fears that the K-series will take another 60 years to reach the state of sport-touring refinement embodied by their beloved Boxer. There's no doubt that a few ingredients—like the suspension and brakes—need to simmer a while longer to fully satisfy those riders whose tastes run to long-haul *haute cuisine* in the Bavarian tradition. But once that happens, the K100 stands to be not only as appetizing a touring bike as BMW has ever offered, but one of the tastiest all-around bikes on any company's bill of fare, as well.

—Jerry Smith

BMW K100

Importer: BMW of North America Inc.,
BMW Plaza,
Montvale, New Jersey 07645

Category	street
Suggested retail price	$5990
Engine type	liquid-cooled four-stroke longitudinal horizontal four
Valve arrangement	double overhead camshafts two valves per cylinder
Bore and stroke	67.0mm x 70.0mm
Displacement	987.2cc
Compression ratio	10.2:1
Carburetion	Bosch LE-Jetronic fuel injection, four 34mm throttle bodies
Gearbox	5-speed
Front fork/wheel travel	BMW 41.4mm stanchion tube diameter/7.1 in. (180mm)
Rear shock/wheel travel	Boge, 3-position adjustable spring preload/4.5 in. (114mm)
Weight	506 lbs. (229.5kg)
Wheelbase	60.2 (1528mm)
Seat height	32.0 in. (812mm)
Steering head angle	27.5 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail	3.98 in. (101mm)
Best ¼-mile acceleration	12.412 sec., 108.82 mph (175 kph)
Top speed (observed)	122 mph (196 kph)
Stopping distance from 60 mph	139 ft. (42.4m)
Fuel consumption	35 to 46 mpg (15 to 46 km/l)
Warranty	3 years, unlimited mileage
Available color	Caribic Blue only

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BMW's recipe for a touring bike, with Old-World flavor and new-tech appeal

Use fresh ingredients, mix well, simmer thoroughly—serves one or two.

The Fazer. It doesn't fall into a category. It creates one.

If you've ever wondered why so many motorcycles are so much alike, we'll tell you. There's no real secret to it, no great mystery.

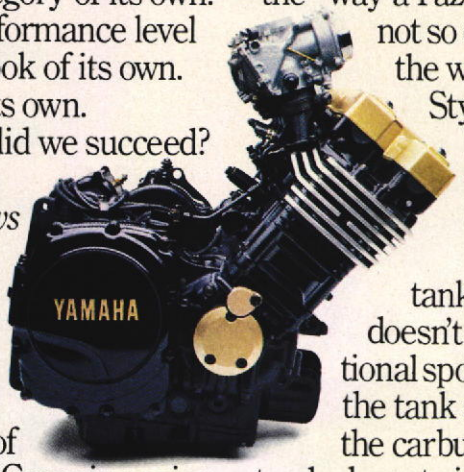
It's simply that most manufacturers make bikes to fit into categories so clearly defined, that one guys' machine probably won't be that much different from the next guys'.

Unless it's a Yamaha Fazer.

Because instead of designing our Fazer as yet another "category" bike, we designed it to create a category of its own.

With a performance level of its own. A look of its own. And a feel of its own.

How well did we succeed? Well enough to have *Cycle News* call the Fazer "...the start of a new generation of... motorcycles."



The heart of the Fazer is its Genesis engine, a revolutionary 697cc liquid-cooled in-line DOHC four incorporating the world's first five-valve configuration.

And along with it, an ingenious 45° cylinder layout, special downdraft Mikuni carburetors, pulse-tuned 4 into 2 exhaust system and enough horsepower to scare the fairing off a super sport bike. While still being tractable and docile enough to cruise around town.

Yet while horsepower is nice, you have to be able to get it to the ground. Which is why we also build our Fazer with a box-section wide cradle frame of high-tensile steel. A pair of thirty-eight millimeter air-assisted front forks using an offset integral brace for greater rigidity. And a special rear suspension system utilizing twin nitrogen-charged DeCarbon-type struts.

Which, combined with triple disc brakes, a highly efficient chain drive and a dry weight only 441 lbs., means the Yamaha Fazer will outhandle just about anything this side of Daytona.

But if it's easy to describe the way a Fazer performs, it's not so easy to describe the way it looks.

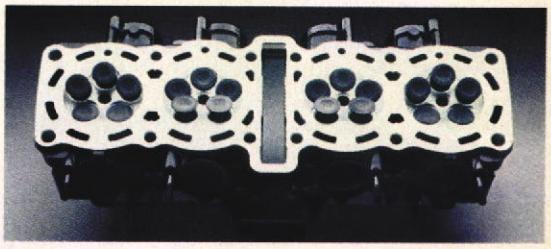
Styling it like other bikes obviously wasn't one of our criteria.

The fuel tank, for instance, doesn't sit in its traditional spot. On the Fazer the tank sits *behind* the carburetors and extends down to just above the engine. Why? Because a lower fuel tank means a lower center of gravity.

And a lower center of gravity means better handling.

And the engine itself, with its black-painted crankcases and polished-aluminum everything else, looks like some kind of high-tech sculpture.

Even the wheels on the Fazer are arresting. Both the sixteen-inch front wheel and massive fifteen-inch rear wheel are slotted aluminum discs. More like something off a Top Fuel dragster than a mid-size motorcycle.



And that's the point. The Fazer was never intended to be like other motorcycles.

The Fazer was intended to be like... a Fazer.

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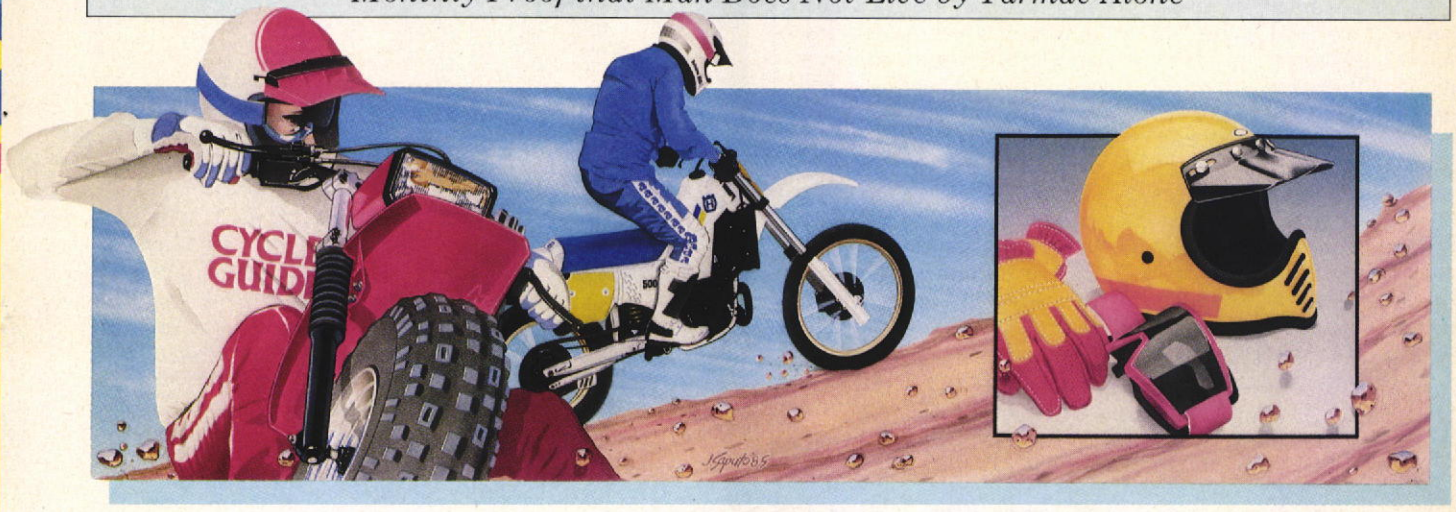


PRODUCT EVALUATION:

Gaerne SuperPro Boots

If you've got a $10 foot . . .

• Anyone who wears a second-hand helmet and low-budget motocross pants probably thinks that a $180 pair of boots is an extravagant waste of money. At that price, the Gaerne—pronounced Gar'nay—SuperPro boots are almost as expensive as a used racebike and twice as expensive as some of the low-buck sock savers on the market. But there's a reason for the Gaerne's high ante: They might last almost twice as long as many of those cheaper boots.

The SuperPros don't *look* outwardly different from many cheaper boots. They have the same basic shape, with the familiar plastic shin protector and a steel toepiece to ward off rocks. But a closer look reveals an attention to detail that increases both the boots' cost and their life expectancy.

The SuperPro's strong point is the Achilles' heel of most other boots: the sole. Gaerne uses an exclusive Vibram sole that can last a long time without getting chewed up or collapsing. The boots' patterned instep also grips footpegs better than anything else around, while four ribs, on an otherwise

smooth sole, give some traction when walking.

Even if you do lose traction, you're not likely to hurt your ankle, because the SuperPros provide plenty of support. A drawstring inner fastening ensures a good, snug fit that's maintained by a quick-release nylon fastener. The leather front portion is closed with three main Velcro flaps, and a fourth one helps seal the top of the boot around your leg.

Once fastened, the Gaerne's stay that way, yet no matter how wet or muddy the fasteners get, they are always quick and simple to open. Mud and water also fail to turn the SuperPros into a soggy, limp leg covers, like it can with some cheaper boots. Good leather accounts for part of that strength, but a molded plastic reinforcing between the leather layers ensures the Gaernes stay in shape, even after other boots look like something your neighbor's Alsatian played with.

This extra strength and durability will start to pay off about midseason. That's when your friends might start looking at a second pair of cheaper boots, and you'll realize that the Gaerne SuperPros were anything but extravagant. *—David Dewhurst*

Importer: Answer Products Inc., Dept. CG, 27967 Beale Court, Valencia, California 91355
Suggested retail price: $179.95
Available colors: white, red, blue or black
Available sizes: 5–13

Simplifying Supercross—Again

• You can put away your calculator when keeping score at a Supercross this year. After experimenting with several scoring systems (some more complicated than others) to determine an overall race winner, promoters have realized that simplicity is the answer. Therefore, the successful format of several seasons ago—four qualifying heats, two semi-heats and a Last Chance Qualifier for those failing to transfer in any of the previous six heats—has been reinstated.

As a result, there will be no more two-heat scoring systems or "calculated" winners. Instead, 21 racers—four from each heat, two from each semi and one from the LCQ—will line up for the Main at every Supercross this season, and, the rider who wins the 20-lap Main will be the winner. Simple—the way it should be. *—Dain Gingerelli*

From the Mountains to the Seats

• When the green flag drops for the Daytona Supercross, March 8, 1986, the racers will, in essence, begin celebrating Supercross racing's 15th anniversary. While the Superbowl of Motocross, first run July 8, 1972, is recognized as the first stadium motocross race, the first-ever

Continued

motocross run on an artificial track—with man-made jumps and obstacles—was at Daytona, March 11, 1972.

But before Supercross racing, there was only motocross; in '80s terminology, *outdoor* racing. And as practically every viewer of the 1971 movie "On Any Sunday" agrees, motocross racing in America owes much of its acceptance to Bruce Brown's feature documentary. Because before "OAS," few Americans outside of a handful of racers knew what "motocross" was. And with good reason: The *form* of motocross racing had been popular in Europe for several decades, but the *term* "motocross" was just gaining recognition among the race crowd here and abroad. Most racers in the late '60s were still accustomed to the word *scrambles*.

Simply, scrambles racing was the forerunner of motocross. The English invented scrambles in the '20s; then it was touted as mountain-grass-track racing.

But no matter what the name, one fact remains: SX/MX/scrambles/mountain-grass racing is good hard-nose action. And as long as the racers continue putting on the shows that they have been, the racing—no matter what it's called—should remain popular for years to come. *—Dain Gingerelli*

Courtin' and Sparkin' the Privateers

• In an effort to pump more money into privateer Supercross riders' wallets, Nippondenso Spark Plug Co. has posted a $100,000 point fund for the AMA/InSport Tour. According to the pay-out, $40,000 of the fund is earmarked specifically for privateer riders, which should help to fatten the paychecks of non-factory riders, and narrow the money gap between privateers and factory racers. As a further incentive, $1000 will be distributed to the top three privateers at every Supercross event. With that kind of money available, the privateers should be more than happy to plug Nippondenso whenever they can.

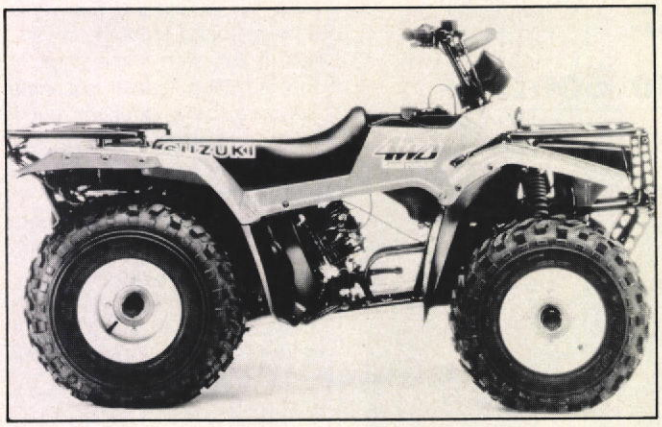
—Dain Gingerelli

Positive PROOF

• It isn't true, but it's been said that "Husqvarna" is Swedish for "conservative." There's a grain of truth in there somewhere, though; Husqvarna has never been known for trendiness, and has been reluctant to abandon plain, proven machinery in favor of bold new technological strokes. That being the case, you can picture the furor when Husqvarna unveiled its PROOF 2-000 at the recent Milan Show. The project bike, instantly labeled "Black Queen" by Milan cognoscenti, is powered by basically an 800cc version of the Husky half-liter sidecar MX motor; the six-speed, liquid-cooled two-stroke is said to produce 80–90 horsepower. That vertical twin isn't the PROOF's only attraction, however. Aside from its triple discs, dual headlamps and minifairing, the bike carries 5.7 gallons of fuel, much of it under the seat, with filler caps both in front of and behind the rider. You probably won't get to exercise dual quick-fills on a production PROOF, though. Husqvarna has made it clear that this 800cc walk on the wild side hasn't changed company policy toward production hardware one bit—at least, not yet.

—Larry Works

King Of The Mountain



• You know that truck commercial, where one 4WD proves its mettle by pulling its competition up a gnarly, rocky hill? Don't be surprised to see the same scene replayed this year, but with Honda and Suzuki striving to drag each other up that monster mountain. With the introduction of Suzuki's LT-4WD, both firms now market four-wheel-drive ATVs, and the claims that each one outpulls, outclimbs and generally outdoes any other ATV add up to a mountain that either might have difficulty conquering. But specification for specification, the newcomer Suzuki appears better configured for the task. In fact, all down the line it looks like Suzuki carefully took aim at the Honda FourTrax 4x4, then proceded to blow the center out of the target. On paper, the Honda's bid for king of the hill rests almost solely on greater displacement and horsepower. Other than its displacement advantage (350cc to the Suzuki's 246cc), the Honda's five-speed transmission, limited-slip differential and full-time 4WD seem like tame stuff next to the LT's specs. Those impressive back-country credentials include a gearbox/subtransmission system yielding 15 forward speeds, and the rider's choice of 2WD, 4WD or 4WD with locked differentials—all controlled by tank-mounted levers. Further, the Suzuki's smaller displacement is offset by a claimed dry weight 70 pounds less than the Honda's, and the LT's four-wheel independent suspension and front-shock adjustablity provide a quick and conclusive end to the 4WD specs war. More technology doesn't necessarily mean *better* technology, of course, but at this point, the Honda's reign as king of the hill seems likely to end the moment the LT's low-pressure knobbies roll off the showroom linoleum onto the hard-pack at the base of that monster mountain. And one thing's for certain: There's room for only one at the top.

—Larry Works

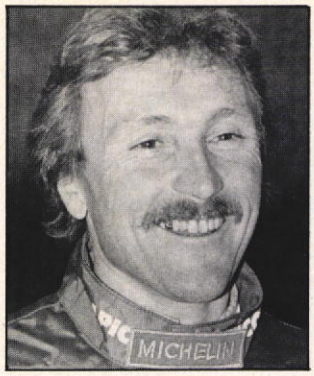
Like Mother, Like Son

• BMW had two entries in the Baja 1000 last November. Besides the Class 30-winning team of Gaston Rahier, Eddy Hau and Kem Park, there was the Class 22 (Open Class) entry of Warren Reid, Tom Kelly and Dave Chase, all from California.

Reid, who raced professional motocross for the Honda and Suzuki factory teams several years ago, was impressed by the BMW's 1040cc opposed-twin engine. After his team's fourth-overall finish, he said of the BMW, "It's the only bike I know that goes 15 to 90 miles per hour—in the same gear. Just turn the throttle up, and that thing's gone." In fact, Reid was so impressed that he asked BMW if he could race again in this year's Baja 1000.

Reid, now 27 years old, also said that the last time he competed off-road was when he was 14. "That was a 30-miler," he said, "and my mom beat me."

—Dain Gingerelli



The Old Boys of Baja

• Life for some Baja 1000 racers begins at 30. Take, for instance, the overall second- and third-place finishers of last November's 882-mile event through the Mexican peninsula. Both teams—the second-place BMW of Europeans Gaston Rahier, Eddy Hau, and California rider Kem Park, and the Honda XR600R team of Jim Fishback and Chris Haines—were in Class 30. Rather than the bike displacement, Class 30 denotes the riders' age—30 years and over.

This was Rahier and Hau's second Baja 1000 Class 30 victory, actually. The Belgian and West German pair were the Class 30 winners in 1984, also. Shortly after their 1985 Baja finish, Rahier and Hau packed up their 1040cc BMW and headed for the Paris-to-Dakar Rally, a grueling 21-day venture through North Africa that Rahier won in '84 and '85.

As for Fishback and Haines, the Baja trek was a novelty for them: Fishback is a retired, and successful, desert and speedway racer, while Haines tuned for AMA 125cc National Motocross Champion, Ron Lechien, last year.

Will the old boys be back for the '86 race? "Probably," said Haines. "After all, there's not much else for me to do after the motocross season ends."

—Dain Gingerelli

Continued

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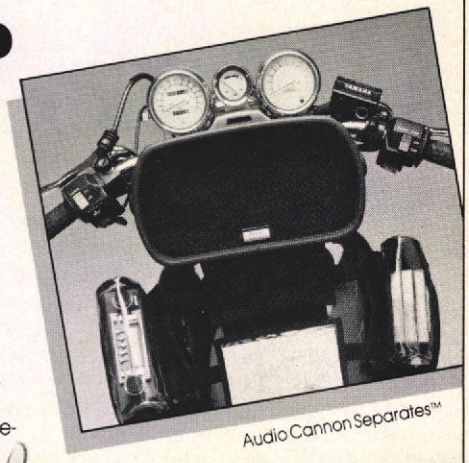

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COMPARISON TEST:

Husqvarna 430 Auto Enduro/ Kawasaki KDX200

Two different ways to get to Point B on time.

BY DAVID DEWHURST

PHOTOGRAPHY © 1986 DAVID DEWHURST

• After 15 consecutive National enduro championships, it seemed that speed, stamina and a six-speed Husqvarna WR were the three essentials for enduro success. The WR seemed almost unbeatable, until Terry Cunningham took his Automatic Husky to championship victory last season and proved that there is, after all, an alternative to the WR, even if that alternative still says Husqvarna on the gas tank.

But the Auto's victory also opens the door to other contenders for the enduro crown, and perhaps no threat appears more serious than Kawasaki's all-new KDX200. Like the 430 Auto, the 200 now seems to be designed with a single purpose: to be a race-winning alternative to the 430WR. But that's where the similarities stop. From that point on, Kawasaki and Husky take completely different routes to enduro victory.

Kawasaki believes that small size and light weight are the secrets of success, and the all-new KDX is proof of those beliefs. The new Uni-Trak chassis is based on last year's 125 motocross chassis, with two crash guards welded to the frame for engine protection. The 1986 KDX's steering head angle is 26.5 degrees, 1.5 degrees steeper than on last year's model. In contrast, trail is kicked out half an inch to 5.3 inches, and the wheelbase is one inch longer at 56.7 inches. Another motocross piece is the new 43mm fork, (up 5mm) with 10mm more travel than last year's. The rear shock, too, is adapted from the motocross bike, with separate adjusters for compression and rebound damping but without the KX's separate low- and high-speed compression adjusters.

Husqvarna also adapted motocross technology to its enduro chassis, with a single piggyback Ohlins shock with externally adjustable rebound damping connected by a rising-rate linkage to a massive box-section swingarm. Unfortunately, the '86 Auto does not get the new fork found on '86 motocrossers. Instead, the Auto makes do with last year's fork, updated with better internal surface finishing in an attempt to eliminate the stiction that plagued the '85 fork. There's nothing else changed in the sturdy chassis, either, because Husky figures it's best not to fool with its race-proven design.

And it's obvious why Husky left much of the Auto's chassis alone, because the 430 Enduro has the agility of a mountain goat. Point the front wheel where you want to go and hang on, because you'll be heading that way immediately. It doesn't matter whether the Husky's howling down a fireroad or picking its way through the trees, the new Metzeler tires and chassis work with the precision of a Swiss watch. It's a perfectly neutral package that leaves no doubt that 16 national championships were won while perfecting this chassis.

Unfortunately, the guys who won them must have been home when Husky did its suspension testing. Despite a better internal finish, the old Husky fork still feels uncomfortably sticky and harsh, particularly at the low speeds common to enduros. Though some riders might think this harsh feel gives the Husky a serious, "racebike" feel, by day's end, "tiring" is a more apt description. The rear suspension is mercifully more supple and does a good job over bigger obstacles, but the Auto will never win awards for sus-

pension compliance.

In contrast, the KDX has the smoothest ride this side of an orbiting space shuttle. At low speed, trails pass under the 200's wheels like so much ink on a Rand McNally atlas. But as the speed increases, all is not well with the KDX; its spring rates are just too low for go-fast charges, and the optional heavy springs are essential for any serious competition. Better tires also would aid the 200, and help close a handling gap on the Auto. As it is, the KDX is less precise at any speed and lacks the Husky's rock-steady feel at tree-blurring velocities.

Further evidence suggests that the Kawasaki's bias has shifted somewhat toward the playbike market. In addition to overly soft suspension, this year's bike has a seat/footpeg/handlebar combination that promotes a seated riding position. The new bars feel taller and the footpegs higher. Combined with an overly soft seat, the seat and pegs make the KDX passable for low-speed sitting, but awkward when standing upright. As a result, standing up requires practice and strong muscles.

Fortunately, the rest of the Kawasaki is much easier to live with. In particular, the new front disc brake and rear drum require very little effort and have exceptional power wet or dry. Some riders feel the brakes are a little too sensitive in marginal traction, but in general they are preferable to the Husqvarna's stopping system. With the Brembo disc more carefully aligned with the disc this year, the Husky front brake does have a better feel than before. The disc is acceptably powerful but still lacks the sensitive feel and sheer lock-it-now power of the Kawasaki's disc. Similarly, the rear drum is strong but rather numb, and some riders found the heel of their right boot catching under the Auto's rear brake rod.

It's essential to adapt to the Husky's brakes, because the Auto offers absolutely no help with engine braking. While the engine shares its liquid-cooled top end with the 430WR, everything below is unique to the Auto. The crankcases are different even from last year's Auto, with

Continued

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cases, crank and shafts narrowed 18mm. Within those cases the Husky remains little changed, with a large centrifugal clutch on the end of the crank passing power back to the gearbox. Inside the gearbox are three pairs of constant-mesh gears, with the gears on the input side riding on separate concentric shafts. The gears on the output shaft ride on a series of freewheel devices that allow the gears to spin free of their shaft. Those freewheels look similar to caged roller bearings, but instead of cylindrical bearings, the freewheel "rollers" have a dog-bone cross-section. When the gear rotates slower than its shaft, the dog-bones lie down, removing any contact between the inner and outer races. But when the gear starts to spin faster than its shaft, the dog-bones stand up, and wedge themselves between the races, and lock the gear to the shaft.

First gear is the only one that locks to the shaft when the Husky's throttle is first opened and the Auto lurches into motion. But

as the input-shaft speed increases, a centrifugal clutch attached to the second-gear shaft engages. That makes second gear start to spin faster than its shaft and as a result its freewheel dog-bones lock second gear to the shaft. As second gear engages, the shaft starts to spin faster than the first-gear set so that the first-gear freewheel *disengages*. As road speed increases, the third-gear centrifugal clutch engages, and the process is repeated for third gear.

You can barely feel any of this slipping and shifting as the Husky rockets forward in the dirt. Once the revs rise and first gear engages, the motor's note changes little. Like a landlocked outboard, the Auto maintains a fairly steady engine speed while the transmission shifts and the bike lunges forward at arm-wrenching speed.

Because the power is delivered in such a smooth flow, the Auto never *feels* all that fast. There's no side stepping from sudden bursts of power and no unexpected wheelies as the motor hits its powerband. But get on the gas hard and the Auto will roost dirt just as far and fast as any woods bike around. And, unlike *any* other bike, it lets you completely ignore shifting, clutching and, more importantly, stalling the motor. Instead, you can devote all your efforts toward choosing your line and going fast—very fast—between the trees.

The Auto's only disadvantage is that once you snap the throttle shut, there's *no* engine braking. Instead you must rely entirely on brakes to stop and keep things under control in the turns. And because the engine is effectively freewheeling under trailing throttle, it's best to use a bit of throttle while braking to help prevent rear-wheel lockup. And while all this makes the Husky feel impossibly awkward on the first ride, the simple technique is quickly mas-

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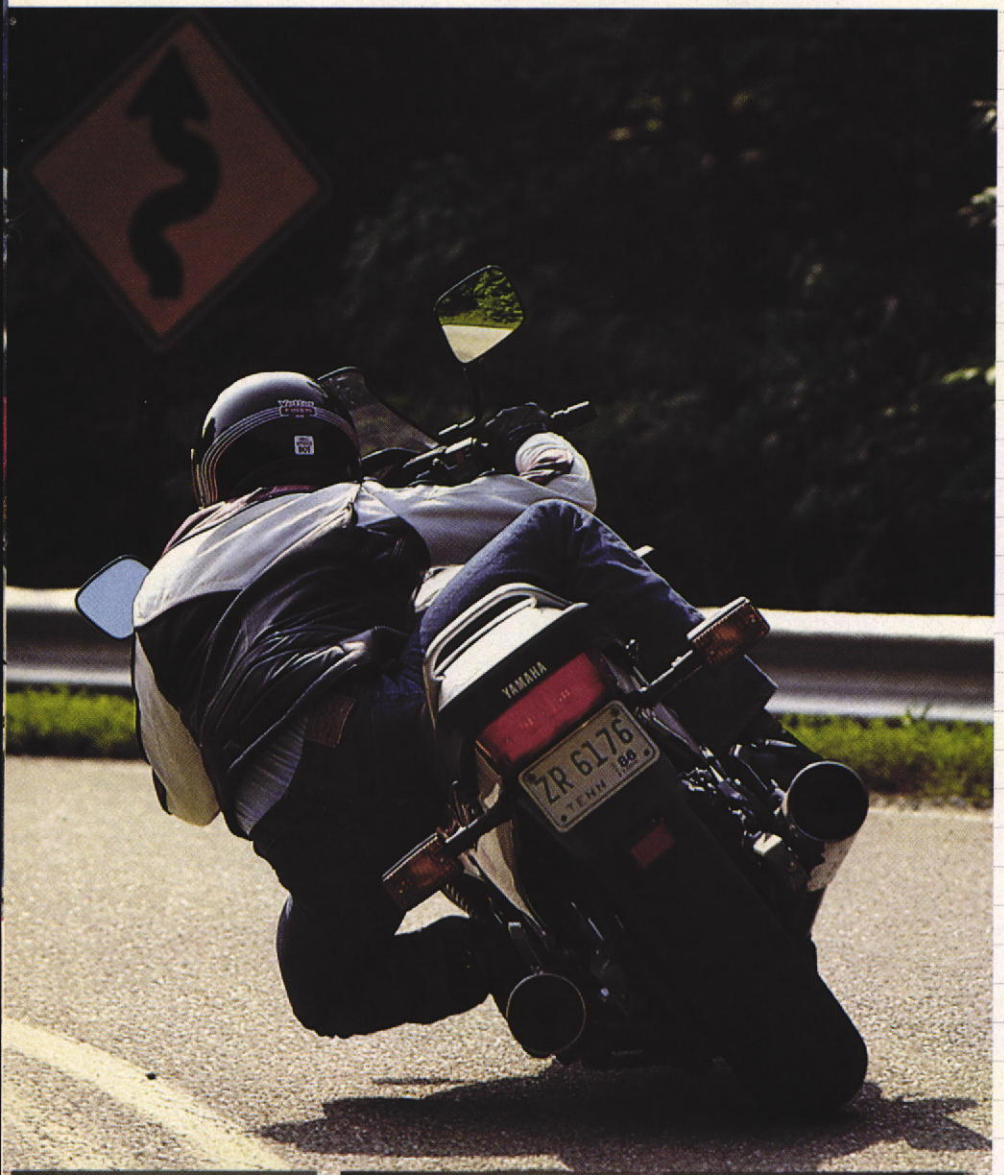

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tered, and the Auto becomes the quickest and easiest way through the woods.

Kawasaki's more conventional approach is much more familiar, and everyone from rank novice to expert falls instantly in love with the KDX's heavily reworked six-speed motor. From the first gentle prod of the kickstart, the KDX purrs like a mechanical cat and carburets perfectly through its new oval-slide Mikuni, with an even wider powerband than last year's motor. The '86 200 has an enlarged intake port in addition to an exhaust boost bottle and Kawasaki's Integrated Power Valve System (KIPS). KIPS adds a mechanically actuated valve on each side of the exhaust port to vary port area and header-pipe volume according to engine speed, while the boost bottle further helps power delivery at low rpm.

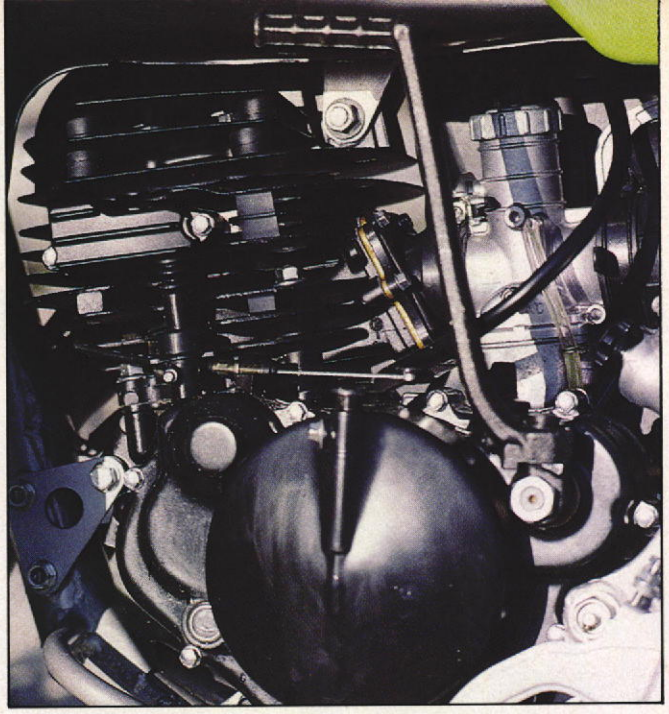
Those changes have given the diminutive KDX the powerband of a giant electric motor. A slightly larger flywheel this year smooths low-rpm power delivery, and helps provide the tractability of a big-inch four-stroke while still allowing instant acceleration when needed. It's amazing how much grunt the tiny 200 has, and it almost refuses to quit, even on the toughest uphill slog. And when the power finally does taper off, this year's larger clutch can take all the abuse you care to inflict. The gearbox also shifts very easily, so the KDX gives you almost no excuse for losing power, traction or momentum.

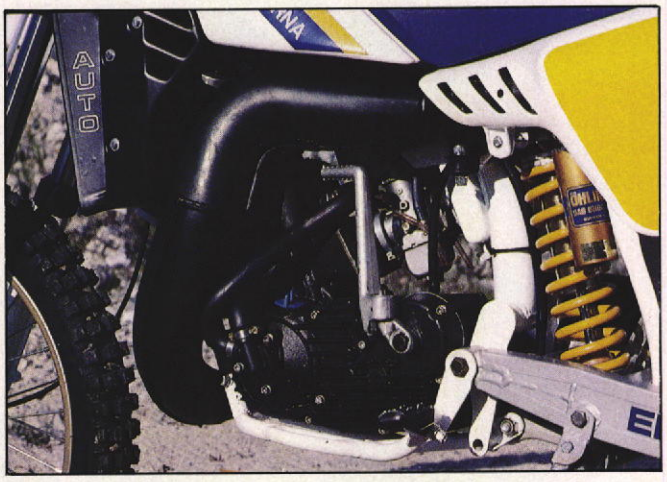
Still, the Kawasaki is only a 200, and getting the best from its motor does call for plenty of shifting and clutching whether you're on a fast fireroad or a tight woods trail. A closer gap between first and second gears this year makes your life a little simpler, but all that extra work ensures that there's no relaxing if you want to win on the KDX.

Victory seems more effortless on the Husky. Without all that clutching and shifting, there's much more time to watch the trail and concentrate on picking the perfect line. There's also more time left to think about details on the Auto, and that isn't always good. While other riders are desperately trying to stay in the powerband, you'll hone in on the Auto's occasionally annoying vibration and the front brake lever that's just slightly too far from the bar, and also wish you could replace the Husky's basic speedo and odometer with something as simple and efficient as the KDX's all-electronic digital timer and odometer. You'll also cringe every time the motor stops and the kickstarter pawls make a loud ratcheting noise that would put dollar signs in the eyes of any Aamco transmission mechanic.

The Kawasaki isn't any closer to perfection, though, without the Auto's niggles. Even with its full complement of goodies such as the excellent timer/odometer, tool pouch and hand covers, the KDX still needs fine tuning on its suspension, handlebars and seat foam. Then it will lose some of its playbike feel and become a true contender.

Not that the Kawasaki is far behind the Auto—or the previously uncontested backwoods winner, the 430WR. And in fact, for all those riders that can't figure the Auto's quirky feel, the KDX200 might just be the perfect choice. But if you're prepared to learn the unique stand-on-the-brakes style that the Auto demands, there's little doubt the Auto can finish ahead of the KDX—or the Auto's own six-speed stablemate. So in one sense at least, the order hasn't changed, because at the end of a long enduro, a Husky still will wander home first. ●





	HUSQVARNA 430 AUTO ENDURO	KAWASAKI KDX200
Importer	Husqvarna Motor Corp. 4935 Mercury St. San Diego, California 92111	Kawasaki Motors Corp. 2009 E. Edinger Ave. Santa Ana, California 92711
Category	Enduro	Enduro
Suggested retail price	$3295	$1899
Engine type	liquid-cooled two-stroke vertical single	two-stroke vertical single
Port arrangement	one reed-valve controlled intake, four main transfers, one booster transfer, one main exhaust	one reed-valve controlled intake, four main transfers, two booster transfers, one main exhaust two variable-height booster exhausts
Bore and stroke	86.0mm x 74.0mm	66.0 x 58.0mm
Displacement	429.9cc	198.4cc
Compression ratio	12.6:1 (uncorrected)	7.7:1 (corrected)
Carburetion	one 38mm Mikuni slide/needle	one 34mm oval-venturi Mikuni slide/needle
Gearbox	3-speed automatic	6-speed
Front suspension/wheel travel	Husqvarna air-spring, 40mm stanchion tube diameter/10.7 in. (273mm)	Kayaba air-spring, 43mm stanchion tube diameter/10.1 in. (256mm)
Rear shock/wheel travel	Ohlins, 22-position adjustable compression damping, 40-position adjustable rebound damping, 23mm spring preload range/ 11.5 in. (292mm)	Kayaba, 13-position adjustable compression damping, 19-position adjustable rebound damping, 20mm spring preload range/ 10.7 in. (271mm)
Weight	245 lbs. (111.1kg)	225 lbs. (102.1kg)
Wheelbase	58.6 to 59.8 in. (1488 to 1518mm)	56.6 to 57.6 in. (1438 to 1463mm)
Seat height	37.3 in. (947mm)	35.9 in. (912mm)
Steering head angle	27.0 degrees from vertical	26.5 degrees from vertical
Front wheel trail	4.72 in. (120mm)	5.31 in. (135mm)
Warranty	30 days on engine and frame only	90 days
Available color	white only	green only

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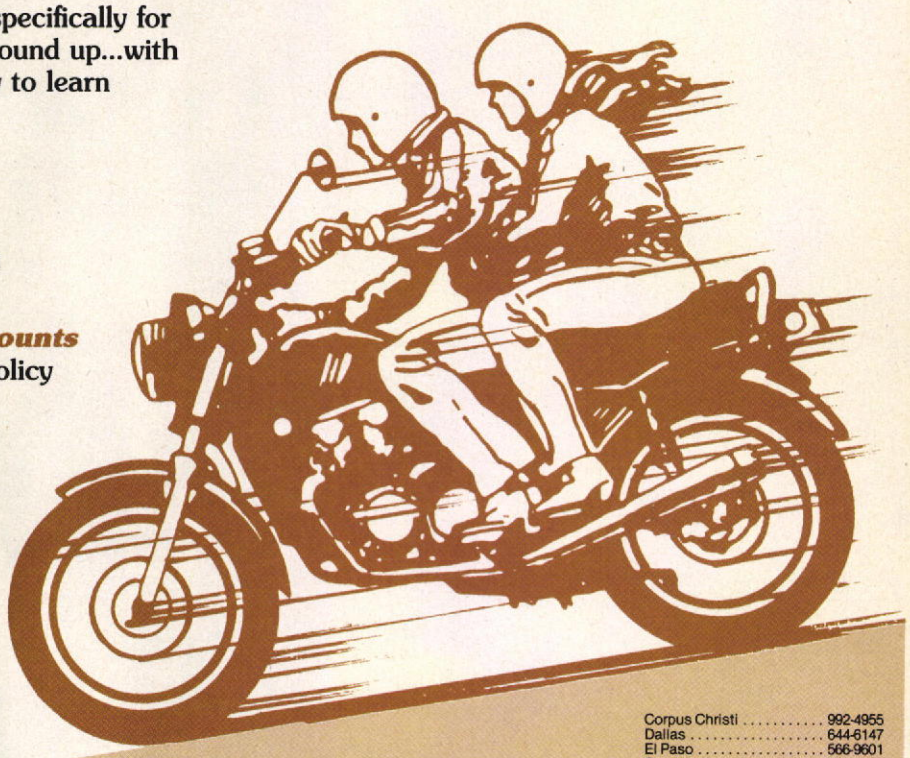

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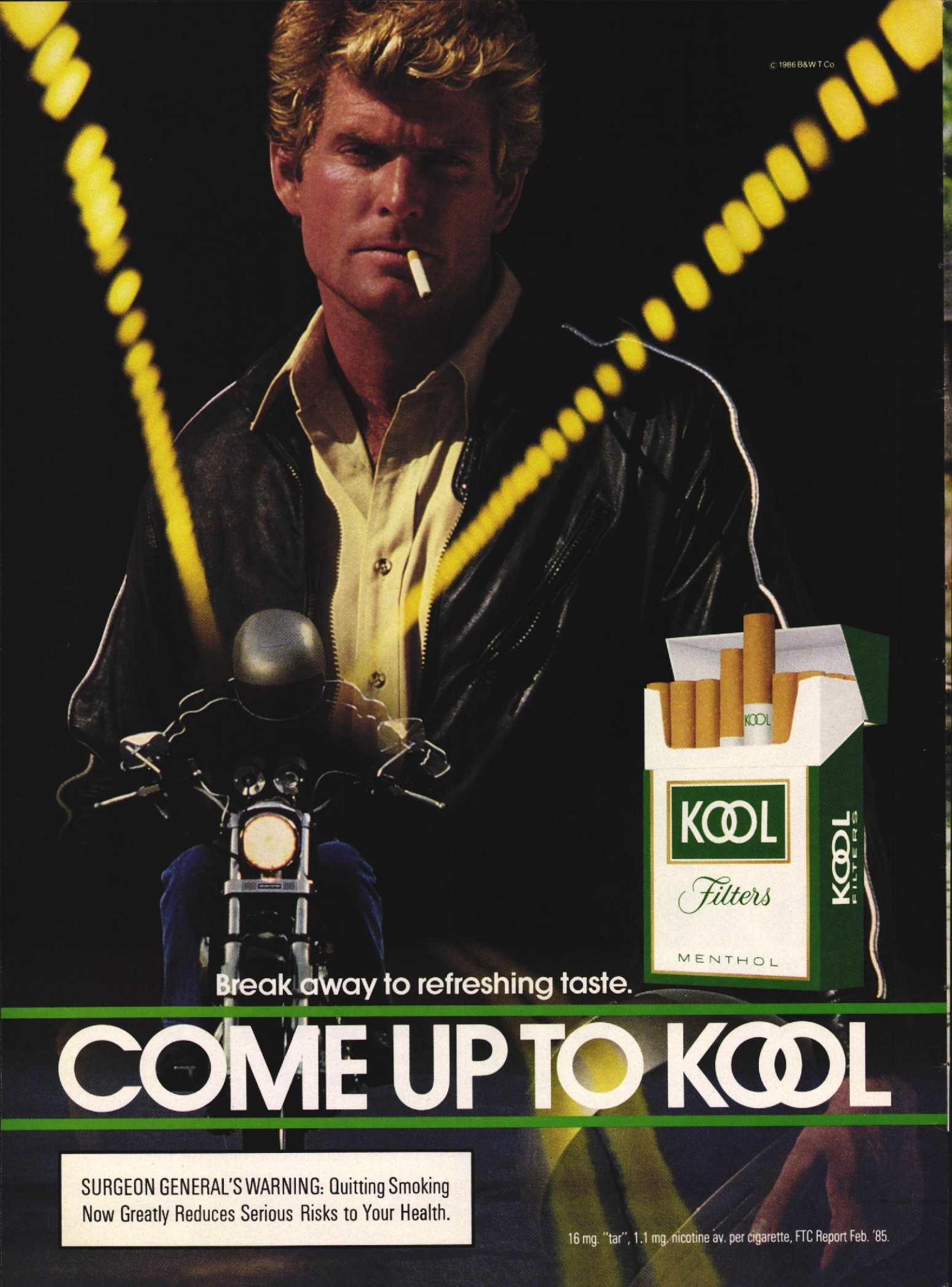
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SPORT LINES

Cycle Guide's True Tales of Racecourses, Dark Horses and Machines at Speed

BY DAIN GINGERELLI

Daytona Vice

The Speedway becomes a dealer's paradise.

• No need to call Crockett and Tubbs in for this case. The France family—owners and operators of Daytona Speedway—aren't dealing in illicit substances. They're still playing it straight, in this case, as straight as the Class C rules called for when the AMA laid out the structure about 30 years ago. In simple terms, the Daytona grid will be a motorcycle dealer's delight as 80 Superbikes line up for the 200 miler, March 9; chances are that the winning machine will resemble a sportbike found on most dealers' showrooms, too.

The marketing justification is the same for all the factory teams: Win with a stock-appearing bike, then cash in on the Daytona glory at the sales level. Prerace favorites have been pared down to three bikes: Honda VFR750R, Yamaha FZ750 and Suzuki GSX-R750. And all three factory teams will have their race livery in showroom-stock colors for this year's Superbike war—a war, by the way, that appears destined to be the best since 1983, when Kawasaki narrowly beat Honda after a season-long struggle.

Despite the VFR750R's newness, Honda enters Cycle Week as the odds-on favorite.

Continued

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Shortly after a private test session at Daytona early last winter, sources at Honda said that defending Daytona champion, Freddie Spencer, turned several 1:55-second laps on the VFR—two seconds below his 1985 pole-winning time. As Honda's race coordinator, Gary Mathers put it, "For a first-test session, things went extremely well."

Even Wayne Rainey, who had never ridden a vee-four Superbike before, was impressed by the VFR's performance. After several introductory laps on teammate Freddie Merkel's 1985 championship VF750F Superbike, Rainey took the new Honda racer out and turned in some lap times in the 1:59-second range. "I didn't want to get back on the old bike after riding the VFR," Rainey said. "It's a nice bike, and has a really broad powerband."

The VFR's similarities to its showroom brethren goes beyond the body panels. According to Mathers, beneath the paint and glitter is a sportbike that in stock form appears suited as much to the track as it is to the road. "There's really not much we had to do to the bike to make it race-ready," Mathers said. "That's the nice thing about its design." It's certainly a virtue that the marketing types at Honda are savoring, too.

It is a trait the Suzuki camp can appreciate, too, and the race team is buzzing with prerace anticipation about the GSX-R750. As Yoshimura's race chief, Suehiro Watanabe, pointed out, the aluminum-framed streetbike slipped right into its race garb. With the addition of different brakes, wheels, a Kayaba fork and Moto-Fox Shock—and of course Yoshimura's requisite mystical engine mods—the GSX-R was pronounced fit for the racetrack. Watanabe, whose team has struggled with the outdated air-cooled GS750E for the past two seasons, seems pleased with both the raw material and his finished product. "Suzuki has built a good sportbike," he said, "Now we can't make any excuses. We have to win."

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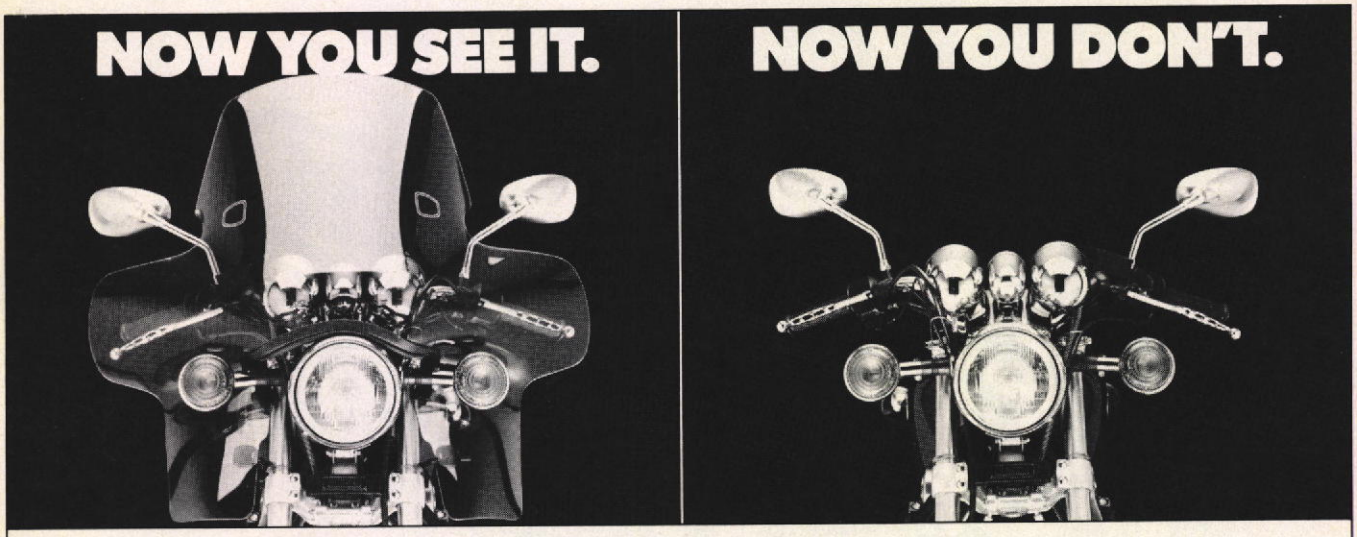
A new chapter opened for Daytona Speedway at the 1985 race

Streetbikes altered the course of a racetrack.

But judging by the lap times Kevin Schwantz turned in two weeks after Honda's Daytona session, the Yoshimura Suzuki camp enters Cycle Week 1986 in second place. Watanabe reported that Kevin Schwantz made a couple of "1:56 laps" on the GSX-R750; compared to Schwantz's 2:01.380-second qualifying time on last year's GS750E Superbike, that's a quantum leap forward. But still, as



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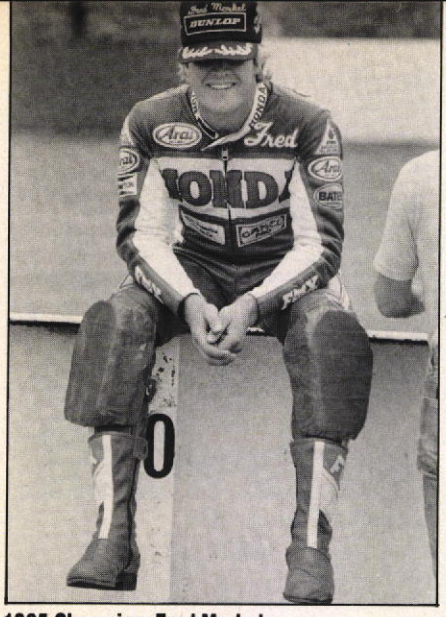

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1985 Champion, Fred Merkel

Superbike's top salesman.

Watanabe pointed out, it's slower than Spencer's reported times. And no matter how much ammunition Yoshimura packs into the GSX-R, Honda will be hard to beat simply because of the four-time Daytona Superbike winner. That point isn't lost on the Suzuki team; as Watanabe pointed out, "Spencer is *Spencer*."

But Suzuki's task should be easier than what lies ahead for Yamaha. While the FZ750 survived its first 200-miler with flying colors (six of the seven bikes finished last year's race), the five-valve engine hasn't displayed the awesome speed of either the Honda or Suzuki. To help offset the imbalance of power, Yamaha wants to lure 1984 World Champion and two-time AMA Superbike Champion Eddie Lawson into the saddle. But Lawson's reluctance to ride a "streetbike," as he and several of his Grand Prix cronies have labeled Superbikes, might seal Yamaha's fate even before the green flag drops; as it stands, factory rider Jim Filice will carry the team colors by himself, since 17-year-old Joe Kocinski is ineligible for Daytona because FIM rules set the minimum age at 18.

But even if Yamaha can't boast about a Daytona win this year, the race shop will brag that it sells *exactly* what it races. As Yamaha Race Director Ken Clark said of the team's FZ750 Superbike, "Basically, it's representative of the parts that we will sell to our customers. It's an over-the-counter racer." Of course, an over-the counter *winner* wouldn't hurt showroom sales.

And parts availability—either to street customers or to other racers—underscores the attitude that the manufacturers have assumed about Daytona and Superbike racing in general. Because—for the present, at least—the closer the race-winning bike resembles its showroom counterpart, the easier that streetbike should be to sell. As a Suzuki spokesman put it, "We're getting back to racebikes that were orginally streetbikes, so that helps our advertising." It also works for a more sound motorcycle industry—and we hope, a better sport. ●

Continued

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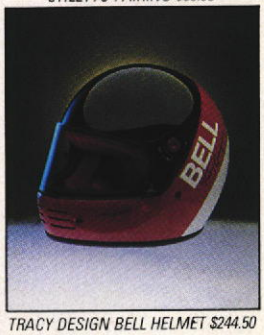

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Lawson at Daytona, 1982

His last Daytona Superbike ride.

• Eddie Lawson is a man of principle. He believes in Formula 1, and is convinced that the AMA class is the logical stepping stone toward winning the world championship, an honor he earned in 1984. Ironically, Lawson had only one full season of Formula 1 racing before he went to Europe in 1983. Most of Lawson's formative years were spent aboard a Kawasaki Superbike. He even won the AMA Superbike Championship two years running (1981, '82).

Naturally, then, when Yamaha asked him to ride the FZ750 Superbike for Daytona, Lawson had mixed emotions. As of Jan. 1, he was still undecided. "If I commit to race," he said, "I'll feel as if I'm giving in to the AMA concerning Formula 1 (the AMA's decision to allow promoters to drop F1 entirely from the program)."

One man who does know what he'll do about Daytona is Kenny Roberts. When asked about rumors that he was going to ride a Cagiva in the Superbike and Battle of the Twins races, Roberts smirked, "Anybody in his right mind would know that I wouldn't ride Daytona—on anything." As far as KR is concerned, the AMA has sold F1 down the river, and the prime mover behind that sellout is Daytona.

It remains to be seen if Lawson will adhere to the opinion expressed by his Grand Prix mentor. We hope not. Because despite what the racers feel, it's apparent that Daytona is not going to alter its stance about Superbike racing. Lawson's involvement would only add to the validity of *American* racing, be it F1 or Superbike. *—Dain Gingerelli*

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Fast Eddie for Formula 1, 1984

Wrestling the OW69 at Daytona.

FLATTRACKING:

Professional Amateurs

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• Expert-ranked dirttrack racers understand survival, because every Expert has survived the weeding-out process that runs from the amateur level up through professional Novice, Junior, and finally, to Expert ranking. It's a tough row to hoe, and not many make it.

That's going to change. A new AMA Pro-Am rule allows promoters to combine amateurs and Novice professionals for selected race meets. The idea, according to Bill Amick, vice president of Professional Competition for the AMA, is to let the amateurs "test the waters of pro racing without jeopardizing their amateur status."

According to the new rule, which was passed by the AMA Congress late last year, the Pro-Am racing applies only to local and regional events, and combines both classes of riders in the same race. The rule also includes restrictions on equipment; only 500cc four-stroke singles, and 250cc two-strokes are allowed. And to make the class *unattractive* to factory-backed racers, a claiming rule lets any rider *buy* the first-place finisher's engine and transmission, for $4000. As Amick said, it's a way of "guaranteeing that more expensive machinery will be kept out of this class."

But the major concern is not so much keeping out the expensive machinery, but keeping in the number of flattrack competitors. According to Amick, the object is "to bolster the grassroots of dirttrack racing with a single program."

The final goal for the racers, obviously, is Expert ranking—as Amick put it, "the top step of the AMA dirttrack ladder." Climbing that ladder requires a firm footing on the rungs, and this year, the first rung is the Pro-Am level. —*Dain Gingerelli*

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A pack of pros racing for Camel money

They learned to smoke at an early age.

Continued

GREGG SMITH RODE TOURMAX INTO THE GROUND.

Gregg Smith, who works as a service consultant for Dun & Bradstreet, averages one-hundred miles a day on his 1983 Yamaha Venture XV12. On September 5, 1984, he had a set of Tourmax™ tires installed with the odometer reading out 54,051 miles.

On May 14, 1985, Gregg wrote to us about Tourmax: "These tires have made a believer out of me! They've traveled 25,401 miles (odometer now at 79,452 miles) and still have several thousand safe miles left on the tread."

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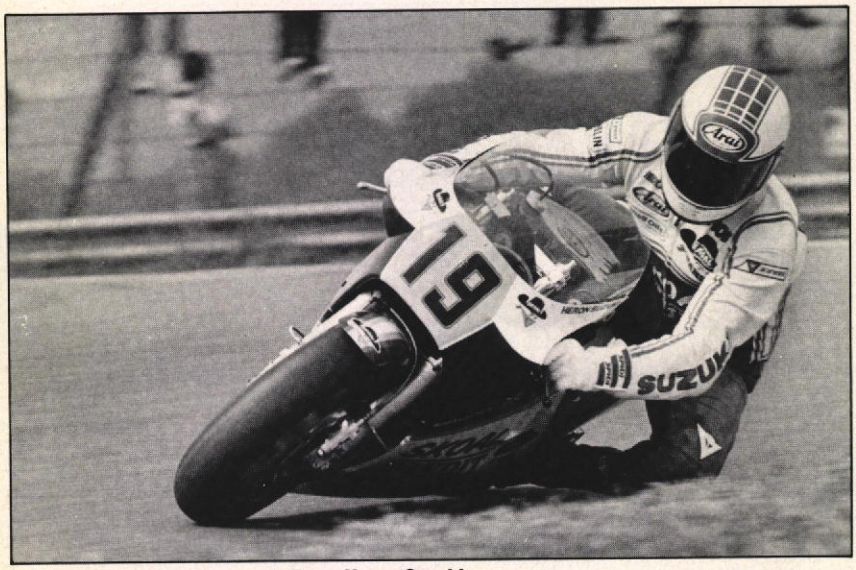

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Rob McElnea riding last year's Team Heron Suzuki

For this GP season, Team Marlboro stole him from the Skoal Bandit.

• Buy British: When the 1986 Grand Prix season gets underway, Eddie Lawson will have a new teammate. Team Marlboro signed English rider Rob McElnea to replace Frenchman Raymond Roche, who could not agree on a contract with the Yamaha team's manager, Giacomo Agostini. According to sources, Roche requested a 100-percent pay raise; as one insider jokingly put it, "Yamaha must have been charging Roche for all the bikes he crashed last season. He had to pay for them somehow."

• Sky, ground, sky, ground—cut and print: While Roche watched his Marlboro contract go up in smoke, he managed to find another smoking partner for this year's GPs—Rothmans. The English-based cigarette firm is sponsoring several teams this year, and Roche will ride for the Rothmans troupe headed by former Honda factory rider Takazumi Katayama. According to reports, at every race Roche's NS500 will be equipped with the same minicamera that Randy Mamola used when he won the Assen TT last year. Considering Roche's track (off-track?) record there should be some spectacular footage for this season's race videos. Places everyone, action. . . .

• Michelin going flat?: Don't be surprised if Michelin throws its hat into the Camel Pro Series flattrack ring this year. Beyond rumors of Michelin's interest in the series, one prominent team, Freddie Spencer Racing, reserved a day at the San Jose Mile for tire testing last November. Considering Freddie Spencer's close alliance with the French tire company,

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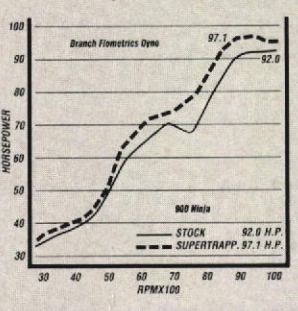

Models for '600, 900, 1000 Ninja; GPZ 750 '83-'85, 750 Turbo; V-Max; FJ1100 '84-'85; 500, 700, 1000, 1000R Interceptor; V45, V65 Sabre; V45, V65 Magna. (Magna and V-Max in stainless steel only.)

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it's likely the test involved more than Carlisle tires, the brand that was standard issue for every bike last year.

• Magoo hurt: Motocross racer Danny "Magoo" Chandler was seriously injured last December, while racing in France. Chandler crashed hard, and received neck injuries that, according to reports, will leave him paralyzed from the waist down. To assist Chandler in meeting his hospital expenses (he had no insurance at the time of his accident), the Pro Rider Benefit, a non-profit organization based in Southern California, spent the winter raising money for a special Danny Chandler Fund. Any help, says PRB spokesperson Penny Nicolai, still is welcomed and needed. You can contact the PRB by writing to: Pro Rider Benefit, c/o Danny Chandler Fund, 14024 Sylvan St., Van Nuys, California 91401.

• $2.9 million purse: Yamaha Motor Corp., USA, has guaranteed nearly $3 million to Yamaha-mounted privateer riders this year. All those riders have to do is contact Yamaha for details, then win—with Yamahas, of course. Included under the sponsorship umbrella are roadracing, motocross, three-wheel racing and dragracing.

• Super-a-Bikers: The ABC Superbikers event is gaining popularity in Europe. Two-time Superbikers winner, Kent Howerton, recently won the Dutch version of America's favorite TV race show, while several other Americans were invited to Italy to participate in an exhibition round at Bologna. Rick Johnson won the race, which was actually described by one U.S. competitor as "more of a show, really." Defending ABC Superbikers Champ, Eddie Lawson, finished ninth: "We had to ride four-strokes, and I was stuck with a two-year-old XT600 with a fading drum (front) brake," he said. "It was fun," Lawson added, "plus it gave us a chance to show them this kind of racing."

• Quote Department: A final note about the 1985 ABC Superbikers event comes from two-time Camel Pro Series Champion, Ricky Graham. Of the four Honda team bikes, Graham rode the only four-stroke; Wayne Rainey, Bubba Shobert and Johnny O'Mara rode the lighter, better-handling CR500-based machines. When Graham was asked why he rode the heavier XR-based bike, he replied, "Somebody had to. They (Honda) said they wanted at least one four-stroke, so I said I'd ride it." Graham also reasoned that the four-stroke was more fun to ride than the two-strokes. "And you've got to have fun if you're going to race," he added, and then went out and finished fifth after a race-long dice with his friend and teammate, Shobert, who was sixth in the 10-lap race. •

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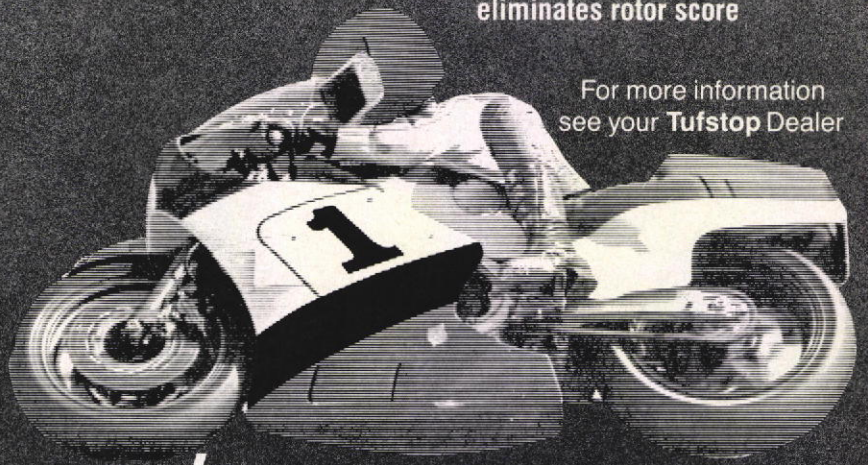
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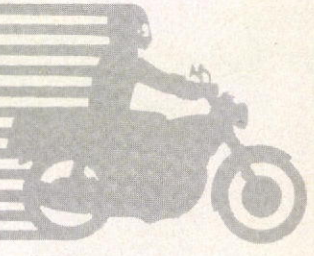
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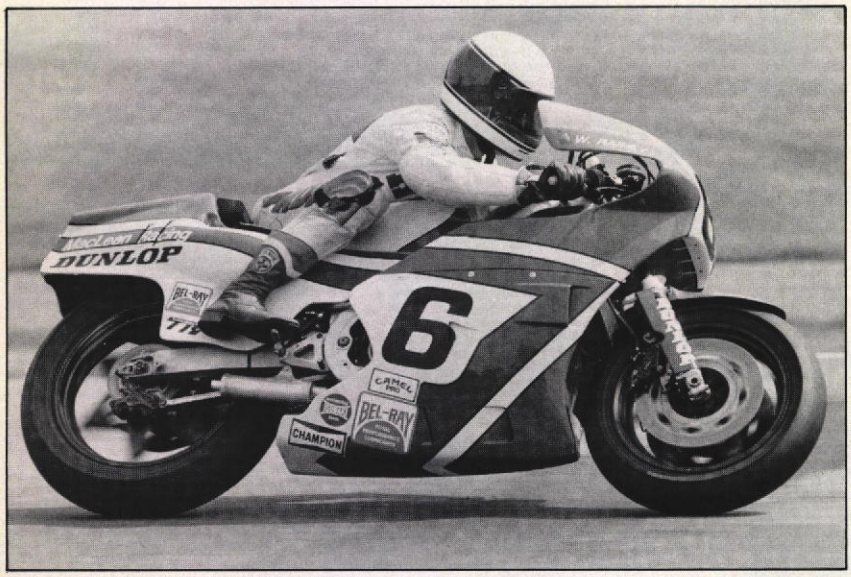
Winners & Losers

Wayne Rainey

The man who would be King.



PHOTOGRAPHY © 1986 TOM RILES

Rainey is back on the RS500 for '86

But this time as a factory rider.

• Roadrace zealots are looking for a new king. Ever since Kenny Roberts retired—abdicated—from Grand Prix racing two years ago, the sport has been without a king. Because while Spencer, Lawson and Mamola certainly have the respect of thousands of GP fans, none of them has quite ascended to the throne left vacant by Roberts. To gain that title, a rider has to be more than just fast on the racetrack. He must be charismatic, and enjoy a rapport with both the press and spectators like no other racer can. And he should have the undenied respect and admiration of his peers, too. He should be, well, very much like Kenny Roberts was at the height of his reign in Europe.

The quest for the new King might take a couple of more years. That's when Wayne Rainey's Formula 1/Superbike contract with American Honda officially ends, and he'll be available for overseas duty in the Grand Prix war zone. Rainey, at just 25 years old, has not even neared his peak as a rider yet. According to many people, including Roberts himself and Rob Muzzy, Wayne's Superbike tuner, Rainey should only get better as a

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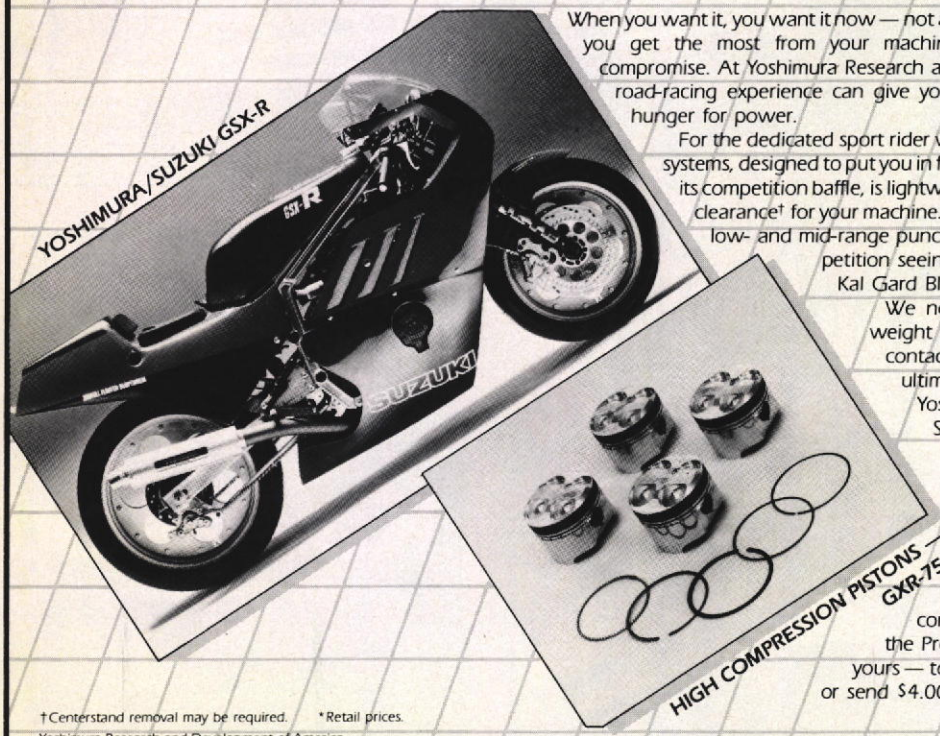

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racer before his stint with Honda concludes after 1987. "I think he's America's best rider *in* America," Muzzy said, "and the one with the most potential, here and in Europe."

Muzzy's confidence in Rainey was founded in 1983, when the pair, as tuner and rider, helped Kawasaki win the AMA Superbike Championship. At the time, Rainey was only a second-year rider in professional roadracing, having followed teammate Lawson's lead of switching from flattracking to roadracing. Under the watchful eye of Gary Mathers (who headed Kawasaki's race program at the time, and now sits at the helm of Honda's competition department) Rainey adapted well to pavement racing, and even managed to win a Superbike race (Loudon) his first year.

By the summer of 1983, Rainey appeared to have the world, or at least the AMA Superbike series, by the tail. He won four straight races on his way to taking the title. During that same time, he became closer friends with Roberts, who was busy swapping GP wins with Spencer in Europe. Still, the initial Roberts-Rainey connection was mostly coincidental. "We became friends mainly because we had the same business manager," Roberts noted.

Kawasaki's decision to dismantle its roadracing team further cemented Roberts' and Rainey's relationship. They went to Europe as a team for 1984, Roberts as manager, Rainey as rider, and the first-timer put the Marlboro-

Rainey and Roberts in the pits

The student quizzes the teacher.

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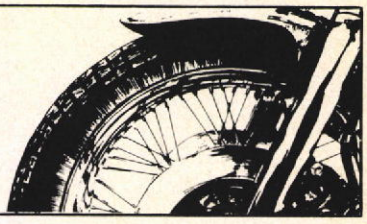

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sponsored Yamaha TZ250 into eighth place in the ultra-competitive 250cc world championship. The program was nixed for '85, so KR took his protégé back to America, and teamed with Mert Lawwill to make a Harley-Davidson competitive on the Mile ovals. Rainey also rode for Team MacLean in the Formula 1 and 2 series last year. And, had it not been for a crash at Loudon, he probably would have taken both AMA titles.

"It was raining and slippery," Rainey recalls of the crash. "It was a low-speed crash, and I figured when I came to a stop, I'd just pick up the bike, and head back to the pit. Then my right elbow jammed into a boulder, and the next thing I knew, I was in pain." The pain eventually put him on an operating table, where a steel pin was inserted to hold the elbow together. The pin was finally removed in early December. "It was the most disappointing race weekend I've ever had," he said of the Loudon incident.

Signing with Honda not only puts the Loudon fiasco behind him, it also puts Rainey in the catbird seat. Over the past few years, he's learned a lot from Roberts about preparing racebikes. Roberts said that during Rainey's forma-

Lawwill slid Rainey into the saddle of an XR750

Sliding into second at the Sacramento Mile.

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—Mike Gillies, *Cycle Guide Magazine Product Review*, Jan. '86

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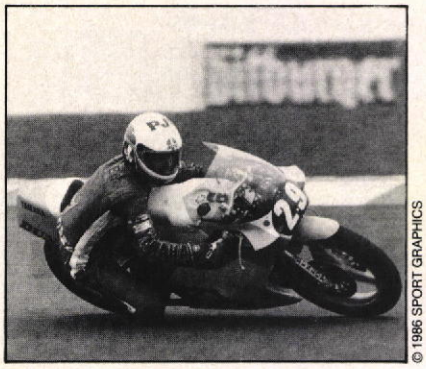
tive years as a roadracer, they would talk about roadracing, and Rainey would drill the King for input. "He would spell out the problems," Roberts said, "and I could tell by the questions he was asking that he was progressing." And even though Roberts figures it's time for Rainey to strike out on his own to continue his learning curve, Kenny still asked him to join the Lucky Strike team. Rainey turned it down, only because the deal couldn't offer the same financial security as his two-year contract with Honda.

That contract landed Rainey essentially right back where he started, with his former Kawasaki teammates, including Mathers, Muzzy and Sparky Edmonston (another Team Green refugee). Only Phil MacDonald, who will prepare Rainey's RS500 for the Formula 1 series, has no previous experience with Rainey; MacDonald's first was wrenching for Wayne at the ABC Superbikers last October.

Rainey returned to his former teammates a polished rider. After only one test session with the new VFR750R Superbike, Muzzy saw a pronounced difference in Rainey as a rider. "He's a good development rider," Muzzy said. Then, with a chuckle, he added, "We taught him well at Kawasaki."



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Riding Roberts' TZ250 in Europe

A year of frustration and fast laps.

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Rainey says hello to Honda factory ride

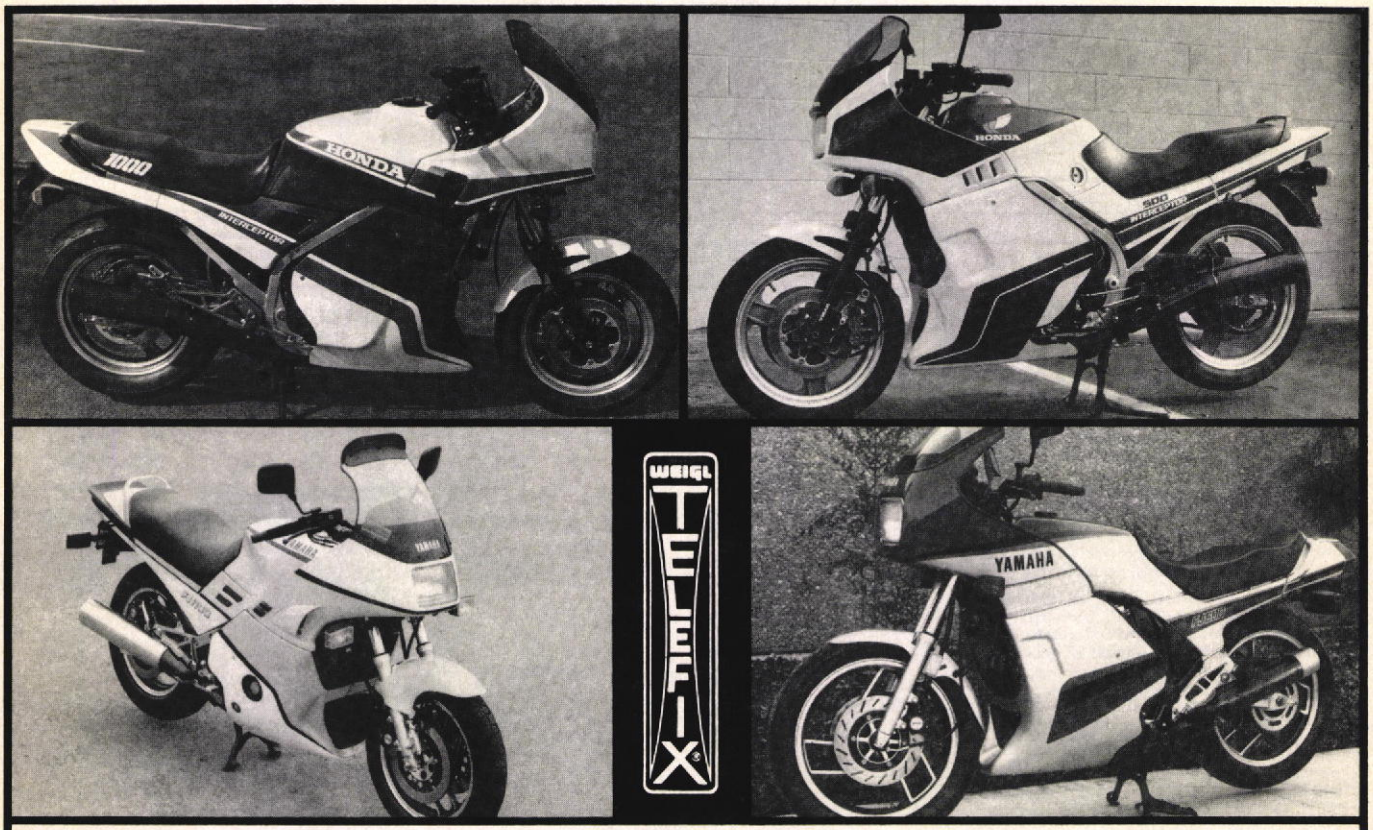
And to a world championship?

You can figure Rainey will only improve as a rider for Honda. As Muzzy pointed out, riding with a factory team allows Rainey to test and develop more equipment than he ever could as a privateer. And the more miles a rider logs, the better he can become—which is exactly how Roberts rose to be King.

People might one day be addressing Rainey as King for another reason: He handles the press well. After the ABC Superbikers event, in which Rainey finished third, he poured on the charm for the cameras in victory circle as if he and ABC commentator Sam Posey were old-time buddies. The camera crew loved it, and chances are, so did the viewers.

Rainey's performance on American television might just be a preview of things to come—on European television. He has made it obvious of his desire to race the Grands Prix: "I want to end up in Europe," he said. In the meantime, he'll prepare himself for the throne by racing in America—in the tradition that Roberts established for American racers more than a decade ago. ●

—Dain Gingerelli



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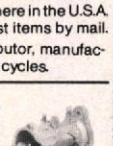
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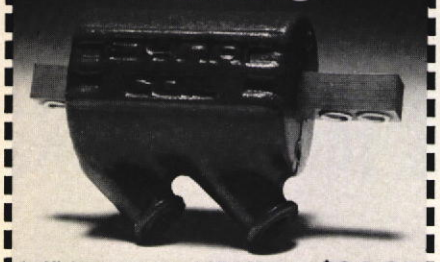

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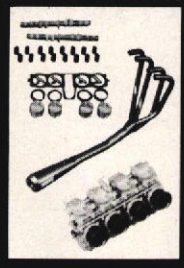

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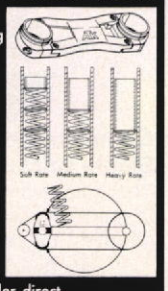

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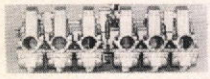

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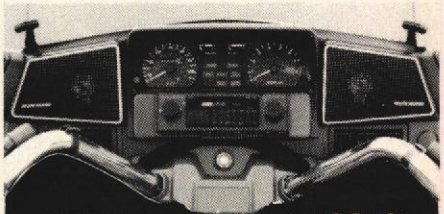

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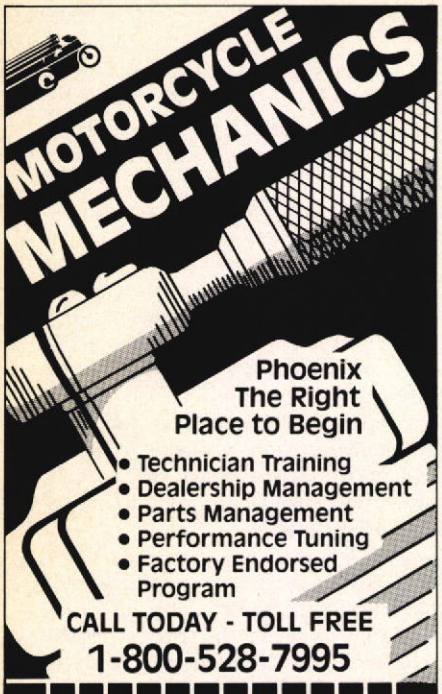

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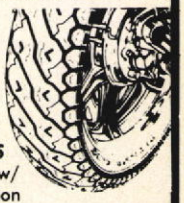

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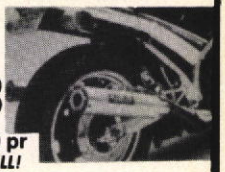

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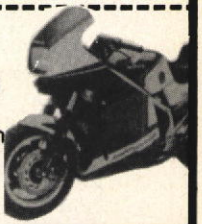

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Setting It Right

Generation Gap

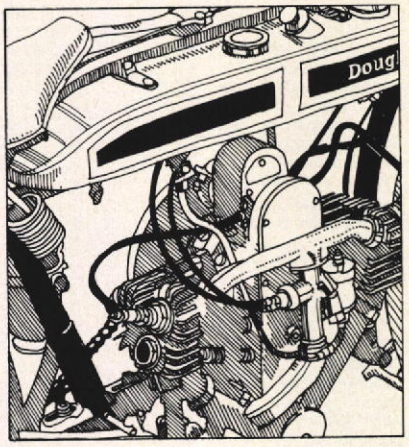
Singular discoveries.

• Between the beast and the truly genteel, there is, as Keats observed, an enormous gulf. For all its enormity this gap is not, however, insuperable; neither is it immeasurable. In motorcycling terms, it can be quantifed as 21 years.

A whole generation of motorcyclists has been born and has grown up—matured, with any luck—between the demise of the BSA Gold Star and the birth of the Honda XBR500. Yet on paper, the two are not so dissimilar: Specify a single clear-breathing high-compression cylinder of 500cc displacement, a dry-sump system to deal with the lubrication of all its associated mechanisms, a light well-behaved chassis, some good brakes, a reverse gear pedal (to suit footrests located well back), a seat that discourages backsliding and styling that is handsome rather than jazzy, and what you have stipulated could well be the XBR500 or the Gold Star. If you took note of the 42 bhp power output, or the roadgoing 108 mph it makes possible, there might still be nothing to choose between them.

Yet the clubman's Gold Star was in its day a legendary beast, fit only for the sternest throttlebenders to pit against the most demandingly curvaceous road courses. It was a true racer, capable in the right hands of matching the cammy Velo and the double-knocker Norton (such was the jargon of that past generation), a racer that could nevertheless be bought for use on the public highway. Open roads suited it best, admittedly; even when idling in traffic, the bellow-and-squeak of its exhaust was likely to induce apopolexy in urban bystanders, while the riding position it prescribed was a flagrant invitation to police interference.

Twenty-one years later, the Honda does everything that the BSA did, except give offense. It does not attract attention as the Goldie did, and whether that is to its credit or not depends on your maturity more than your age; but the XBR does almost everything else rather better. It certainly stops better, steers better, corners better, idles better. It needs less cosseting, less maintenance, less purchasing power. It starts at first kick if you must (it was usually the second kick that fired the Goldie, if the first one did not launch you into the next



county), but it is safer and more sensible to start it at first tickle of the button.

Today's lusty young enthusiast might well be tempted to dismiss it as a soft and gentle plonker for genteel old grownies (or groanies?) to ride in search of their lost youth. Not so; evidently, the youth of today has learned to contain its lusts with a modicum of common sense, for in fact, the XBR500 has become the best seller in its class since it came onto the British market a year ago, and it is also doing pretty well on the European mainland.

The reason cannot be that all those buyers want to revive fond memories of the late '50s and early '60s. If that were the intention, they would want wire wheels and metal side panels. And in Japan, where the current craze is for British classics, Honda offers it in that wire-wheel, neo-classic guise—just as Yamaha is trying to revive similar sentiments in the United States with its uncharacteristically tinny-looking SRX600. But the real reason for the European success of the quite unbeastly Honda is that it is a well and truly charming motorcycle.

Charm might not be something readily associated with any kind of motorcycle, least of all with lively big singles. Long years ago, though, motorcycling did possess a charm that could be sensed in riding a long-legged single, which barked along at deceptively high speed. There was no music in it, for the sensations were coarsely physical (especially the vibration, effectively counterbalanced out of the Honda), but the feeling of welfare it promoted was proof that the spirit as well as the body was getting a massage.

Thanks to the bobweight that slips between the cheeks of the crankshaft whenever the big end is out of the way, the rider gets very little body massage on Honda's thumpless banger. Thanks to modern dampers, and modern ways of minimizing unsprung mass, there is not even any significant movement relayed from the road surface to rumple his wrists or wrinkle his rump. Only the spiritual massage is left, and it is of a very different character from the exultant launch *in limbo* available from any modern whizzcycle when the wick is turned up. Instead of exaltation, the XBR brings ease.

When a man's mind runs faster than his horse can gallop, wrote an Elizabethan playwright, *they quickly both tire.* As always happens, the truth he wrote outlasted him; it is as true of us and the horsepower we have between our knees now. But when his bike seems to match his needs without ever breaking out of a canter, when it soothes his mind to a saunter, when altogether it makes a journey so easy, then life itself seems to shed its difficulties.

No soft and soggy tourer can do this. Any laxity in communication through the controls, any lassitude in response to the rider's demands, creates a gap into which the mind, instantly disappointed and immediately worried, rushes headlong with every suspicion armed. That is no way to an eased ride and an easy life. Only the crisp and accurate translation of the rider's mind to the tires' contact patches, such as only an essentially sporting machine can faithfully undertake, can keep the motorcycle in synchronism with the mind. Communication is not good enough; the ideal is more like communion.

Did we experience that, on those prototypical bangers that wobbled their way into extinction a generation ago? Harking back, it was more like commotion. Cams were coarse, cans were crude, the rumpus was noisesome and the rump was numbed. Drum brakes took an age of lost motion and an agony of engagement before they took effect; skimpy skew-shouldered tires on wheels fit only for perambulators added their own faltering interpretations of what today's broad-rimmed rubber so truly translates. The coming of the whooping hordes of fours, both fancy and furious, has forced us to learn a lot in that gap-plugging generation; having learned it, it is as pleasant as it is proper to remind ourselves of the single thing that we ought not to have forgotten.

—L.J.K. Setright

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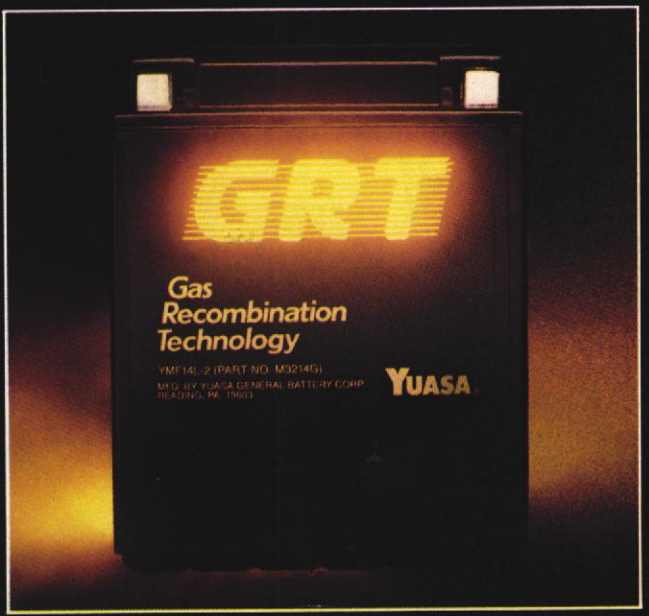

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